Myths, Methods, and Messiness: Insights for Qualitative Research Analysis

An Edited Volume of the Proceedings of the 5th Annual Qualitative Research Symposium at the University of Bath

Edited by:
Bryan C. Clift, Julie Gore, Sheree Bekker, Ioannis Costas Batlle, Katharina Chudzikowski, and Jenny Hatchard

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

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Thomas Lister is a Ph.D. student at the University of Exeter. He is a sociologist who is currently working on the Wellcome Trust funded project: 'Exploring Diagnosis: Autism and the Neurodiversity Movement'. His contribution to this work focuses on how people come to be labelled as autistic in adulthood and the consequences of being so. This work is supervised by Professor Christabel Owens, Dr Ginny Russell (the project lead), and Professor Susan Kelly, from the University of Exeter. His substantive interests surround the sociology of health and illness, science and technology studies, and broader social theory. He previously studied sociology at the Universities of Warwick and Cambridge.

Fiona Remnant MSc International Policy Analysis, is Managing Director of Bath Social and Development Research (BSDR), and has worked in development for over a decade, specialising in the application and communication of academic research to practitioners and policymakers. She has worked for the Centre for Poverty Analysis in Sri Lanka, Oxfam in the UK, and the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bath. She collaborated with James Copestake on the Assessing Rural Transformations action research project at the University of Bath between 2012-2016 which culminated in the development of the QuIP and the creation of BSDR.

Sergio A. Silverio, having read for an Integrated Master's Degree in Psychological Sciences (Clinical & Health Psychology) at the University of Liverpool, developed a keen interest in qualitative methodologies, in particular Grounded Theory. His first academic role was at the Evidence-based Practice Research Centre, Edge Hill University where he led on the qualitative elements of multiple healthcare research projects. Passionate about working in cross-disciplinary teams, Sergio later moved to the Institute for Women's Health (IfWH) at the University College London as a Research Assistant in Qualitative Methods. Whilst there, Sergio ran the qualitative arm of an NIHR-funded project evaluating women's experiences of early pregnancy assessment units, allowing him to further develop his interest in women's health research, and refine his qualitative skills. At the end of this project Sergio was made an Honorary Research Fellow at the IfWH, before moving to the Department of Women & Children's Health at King's College London as a Research Assistant and simultaneously completing a Master's Degree in Psychological and Psychiatric Anthropology at Brunel University London. Most recently, Sergio was granted an Honorary Fellowship at the University of Liverpool's Department of Psychological Sciences, where he originally trained as a Psychologist.

Hilary Wallace is a Consultant Anaesthetist at Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust who has primarily focused on airway management, resuscitation, and the emergency treatment and management of patients' airways in crisis situations such as 'cannot intubate, cannot oxygenate' scenarios. Having developed an interest in research Hilary has pursued further academic endeavours alongside her clinical training, as well as significantly contributing to her Trust's clinical academic and medical education programmes of training and research. This work has lately seen her collaborate with academic colleagues from a variety of professional backgrounds in universities in London and across the North West of England to develop an ongoing programme of research into emergency front of neck access training for Specialist Trainee level Anaesthetists.

Lucy Wenham completed her PhD in the Sociology of Education at the University College London Institute of Education (IoE) before becoming a Lecturer in Education at the University of Bristol. She is interested in issues of educational disadvantage, marginalisation and inequality. As a Secondary School teacher in schools with challenging circumstances for over 15 years, much of her research is ethnographic, and she prefers a grounded theory approach to analysis in order to allow the voices of the marginalised to shine through. She is also drawn to critical pedagogies, as well as issues surrounding knowledge in the classroom.

Rosie Westerveld is currently an ESRC White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership Scholarship doctoral researcher at the University of Sheffield School of Management. She is a multilingual academic, consultant and project manager in the fields of international development, gender and education, NGO partnership development and practices. Broadly, she is interested in topics spanning violence and human rights, social justice and equality, social movements and activism, alternative pedagogies and participation. Her research focuses on strengthening civil society by linking theory, practice and policy to improve inter-organisational partnerships for international development. The title of her doctoral thesis is *Strengthening civil society: Linking theory, practice and policy to improve inter-organisational partnerships for international development*. This work investigates Development Partnerships (DPs) as interorganisational, transnational, and North-South NGO organisational partnerships operating in the field of international development. She draws from critical, feminist, decolonial and Southern theories to contribute to the ongoing discussions and reflections on systemic, organisational and individual practices and processes of interacting, inter-relating and partnering.

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Introduction

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The theme of the 5th Annual Qualitative Research Symposium at the University of Bath shared the same title as this text, ***Myths, methods, and messiness: Insights for qualitative research analysis***. The event served as a forum for discussion of analytical approaches to qualitative research amongst colleagues and peers across a range of disciplines—including Education, Cultural Studies, Health, International Studies, Management, Policy Sciences, Psychology, Sociology, Sport and Exercise.

Following the Symposium, this edited volume contributes to fostering a shared understanding amongst qualitative researchers of the ways in which we understand, develop, use, teach, and review analytical approaches. As part of the Symposium's broader central aim to facilitate an interdisciplinary discussion of common features, challenges, and changes in qualitative research – such as methodological approaches, innovative methods, sampling techniques, theoretical integration, or enhancing quality – analysis is undoubtedly an area that traverses disciplines in varied ways. This edited volume expands on the fruitful presentations, discussions, and work beyond the confines of the event itself.

The inspiration for the Symposium grew out of colleagues from the University of Bath who gathered together to discuss issues in qualitative research. Initially, this group was recognized as the Qualitative Methods Forum (QMF), and included all interested staff and doctoral students across campus. In 2014, the group's organizers proposed and developed the initial Symposium, which was hosted at Bath in 2015, in order to connect and collaborate with our colleagues and peers across the South West of England. Each successive Symposium has built on the momentum of previous years and carried an explicit theme meant to speak across disciplines and traditions in qualitative research. The themes from the previous four years were:

2015: Quality in qualitative research and enduring problematics
2016: Two faces of qualitative inquiry: Theoretical and applied approaches
2017: From the established to the novel: The possibilities of qualitative research
2018: How do we belong? Researcher positionality within qualitative inquiry

This edited volume responds to the continued interest and success of previous Symposia. It is our second volume produced in conjunction with the event.

SETTING THE SCENE OF THE CONFERENCE

Distinct from the mechanics followed in quantitative research, there are innumerable ways to conduct qualitative analysis. These range from structured step-by-step processes, through more flexible frames to those without pre-determined form. The variety of analytical approaches presents both exciting possibilities and challenges across a structured to unstructured spectrum.

Increasingly, qualitative researchers are being encouraged if not required to communicate their analytical approach in detail, most notably in academic journals. Yet, several challenges for all writers and readers of qualitative inquiry arise from this expectation, some of which include the following. First, although general and disciplinary-specific qualitative research texts share excellence in practice, processes, and examples, the analytical process very much becomes specific to the researcher(s). This uniqueness requires a sufficient rational for methodological choices from the outset of our research design through to publication outlets. Second, expectations for describing analytical approaches vary considerably in relation to the specificity of a named approach, disciplinary norm, theoretical or interpretive orientation, different data form, or publication style and structure. Third, despite advances in qualitative education and training, the limits of preparation and training provision compared to quantitative research leave many scholars new to qualitative inquiry adrift. Fourth, we—as learners, mentors, supervisors, evaluators, reviewers, and editors—are all challenged with how we recognize, understand, appraise, and engage with an extensive variety of analytical interpretations and innovations of analytical processes.

The myriad of forms qualitative data analysis can take requires researchers to, frequently, think ahead. Well before any data is collected, Robson and McCartan (2016) submit that considerations of how the data *might* be analyzed should form part of the research design. Yet, while this consideration is useful, analytical plans should not shackle a researcher nor preclude them from altering their analytical approach once data collection has begun. For this reason, Silverman (2013) sketched some broad, yet flexible, "rules" for qualitative analyses. Predominantly, these include, for example, starting analysis as soon as possible even before all data has been collected, avoiding early hypotheses, and treating data thoroughly and fairly. This final "rule," which entails researchers to not "cherry pick" or "look for telling examples," is fundamental considering that it is one of the common critiques of qualitative analysis.

In response to the common critique of "cherry picking" data, reflexivity and rigor are key demonstrations that researchers need to provide. One way of demonstrating rigor is clearly and carefully documenting the analytical process. At the same time, this process is also and should be infused with the researcher's reflexivity on the work and their relationship to it. Braun and Clarke (2013) contend that no qualitative analysis process is inherently *better* than another. Rather, analysis is sutured to the research question(s) and methodological approach at hand. From thematic analysis or interpretative phenomenological analysis, through grounded theory, framework analysis, narrative analysis, or discourse analysis, to name a few, each manner of handling and working with data is accompanied by its own idiosyncrasies. Inevitably, such a scope of analytical approaches, twinned with the inherent subjectivity of qualitative research, often leads to researcher uncertainty. We suggest

that these complexities, challenges, and senses of uncertainty, whilst quite common, are infrequently discussed formally at conferences or in published works.

When research is written up, especially for journal publication, the analytical process is often marginalized in favor of findings or topical discussion. Opportunities for exploring qualitative analytical processes with depth are frequently left for coverage in classroom instruction, texts overtly about methods, other external resources, formal masters or doctoral theses, or appendices in longer texts. Acknowledging this, the Symposium and this edited volume make space for exploring analytical discussions more directly. To prompt this, the Symposium outlined three ways of thinking about analytical approaches in qualitative research in order to stimulate interdisciplinary discussion:

> *Analytical Processes* encourage authors to focus on the various aspects of the research process that inform analysis (e.g., paradigmatic orientations, disciplinary expectations, or methodological choices). Several questions for consideration in this area included the following: What forms of data analysis are available to us? What relevance do those forms have to the focus or intent of our inquiry? How do different disciplines value, evaluate, or transform analytical possibilities? In what ways do different forms of data (e.g., words, images, field notes, web-based, videos, etc.) influence the analytical process? What are the strengths, weaknesses, or challenges of different analytical methods? When and how do data collection and analysis relate to one another?
>
> *Practicing Analysis* invited authors to explore, detail, and exemplify their analytical practices within their ongoing or completed research. Questions put to authors for attention included: Can you walk someone else through your analytical progression? What analytical approach do you employ, and how? What are the challenges faced in the analysis? When does analysis go awry? Is messiness a problem, and how do you restore 'order' for the reader? How do you know you have done analysis 'correctly' or 'incorrectly'?
>
> *Interpreting and Representing Analysis* asked authors to attend to the specific relationship between and interplay of interpretation and representation. Several questions guided this area, including: At what point in the research process does interpretation and analysis end and begin? When, where, and how do we integrate theory? At what stage should literature be integrated with analysis? How do we shift from analysis to output or representation?

These three themes for thinking about analysis are framing devices. By no means are they fixed or universal ways of approaching disciplinary and interdisciplinary ways of thinking about and discussing analysis. On the contrary, they are temporary place-holders aspiring to foster discussion across disciplinary lines. As the presentations and work herein attest, these categorizations are permeable, overlapping, and provisional.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VOLUME

Like the Symposium, this edited volume is comprised of emerging, mid-career, and established researchers who conduct qualitative research. In **Chapter One, Thomas Lister**, argues that the way in which qualitative analysis is presented in methods books oversimplifies complex and non-linear analytical processes. He suggests that although there are multiple approaches to analysis, it is the

interplay between the practices and ideas that we apply and those that are produced by them that comprise our analysis. He advocates for a more "honest" approach to analysis wherein textbooks offer only particular representations or examples of analysis. Such a position identifies strongly with understandings of qualitative research and analysis as unique and specific to the research and researcher. Analysis in his understanding is something we construct as we *do* it. Analytical *processes* then become suggestions or guides rather than a set of rules or recipes to be followed, and wherein the rationale for, detailing of, and reflection upon your *process* become vital.

One agenda increasingly being pushed onto or into research in higher education is the call for impact. How data collection and analysis are conducted with impact in mind is the subject of much debate and the subject of numerous methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative. **James Copestake, Gabby Davies, and Fiona Remnant** in **Chapter Two** explore the use of a social impact assessment, Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP). Collectively, they work in the area of international development, wherein QuIP has made a significant contribution (Copestake, Morsink, & Remnant, 2019). Part of the process of using QuIP involves separating the people involved in data collection, analysis, and management tasks—which is perhaps a controversial move for many in qualitative research who consider the researcher's closeness to data in its collection and analysis essential. In doing so, they suggest that they can more fully address the importance of and problematics that arise with positionality, which can enhance transparency, auditability, and credibility. After detailing QuIP and the process of its implementation, they unpack the analytical process with special attention to positionality, stakeholder engagement, and contract management. They illustrate robustly both the *process* and *practice* of analysis with QuIP. Also working in the area of qualitative research and impact, but with a more intensive focus on policy around alcohol and tobacco, are **Jenny Hatchard, Duncan Gillespie, and Penny Buykx**. Their work in **Chapter Three** takes up framework analysis as part of an interdisciplinary public health project aimed at informing alcohol and tobacco policy. In using framework analysis, they adopt a deductive approach that many in qualitative research problematize because of its strong association with quantitative research, theory testing, or tendency to supersede the empirical by theory or knowledge. Yet, they explicate how their approach facilitated timeliness, the identification of data trends, the understanding of complexity, and the organization of messy data. They also discuss strengths and weaknesses to their approach while advocating the possibilities of deductive approaches. As they do, they illustrate well the *processes* and *practices* of framework analysis.

Grounded theory is one of the five most widely recognized qualitative methodologies (Creswell, 2007) and one that is used in a range of disciplines. The two chapters in this volume focused on grounded theory offer different takes on its use. In **Chapter Four, Sergio A. Silverio, William Gauntlett, Hilary Wallace, and Jeremy M. Brown** illustrate their step-by-step process with grounded theory in the field of health and healthcare services. They suggest that, in a moment of increased calls for inter- and multi-disciplinary research, a more structured approach to analysis, which can be found with grounded theory, is helpful for meeting expectations of rigour in different disciplines. In their words, this "taming" of messiness in qualitative analysis offers a means for establishing productive commonalities between disciplines where the guidance for inter-disciplinary research is often vague, limited, or absent altogether. In detailing their structured and iterative *process* of working with grounded theory for an interdisciplinary audience, they suggest that methods and methodologies become more robust as they travel, adapt, and engage with different disciplines. Adopting a somewhat less rigid approach to grounded theory compared to Silverio et al., is **Lucy Wenham** in **Chapter Five**. Working in the field of education, she shares her specific *practice* of using the analytical approach in grounded theory with ethnographic data. Central in her concerns

working with marginalized students in education is the desire to bring student voices to the fore while attending to rigour, reliability, and reproducibility. Her illustrative use of diagrams linked with data extracts throughout the analytical *process* details how diagramming augments the rigour and transparency of her *practice*.

The final two chapters in this collection move us toward more fluid, flexible, and creative analytical approaches. Working in the overlapping areas of management and organizational studies, political sociology, and development studies, **Rosie Westerveld** in **Chapter Six** details her use of Critical Participatory Action Research. Intending to foster partnerships amongst organizations in transnational settings while attending to power, privilege, and inequality, she reflects upon her use of a diary as a means of researcher reflection. She suggests that the diary is a site and source of data that informs how we recognize the generation of data with and through the researcher. Her *practical* and *processual* illustration of reflexivity aids in understanding the messiness and ethics of qualitative research and analysis. Rounding out the volume, **Hillary Baxter** in **Chapter Seven**, offers a more creative and far less structured analytical approach to analysis as she works in the overlapping space between drama and healthcare. Her work draws on drama, ethnotheatre, and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to examine menopause in the workplace. In bringing together multiple forms of data—dialogue, visual, and written—she developed several short performances as a means through which to explore women's experiences, perceptions, and issues with menopause in the workplace. These culminated in her play *Puzzled* (2018). Her chapter details the methodological and analytical process, tensions, and messiness in arts-based research. While doing so, she challenges conventions between truth and performance and integrates all three themes framing this collective work, analytical *processes*, *practices*, and *interpretation and representation*.

Taken together, these seven essays offer practical tools and guides alongside thoughtful insights for those undertaking qualitative research and embarking on their own analytical journeys. We recommend this volume to new and experienced qualitative researchers who seek insights into others' lived experience of analysis. Regardless of where authors sit on the spectrum of structured to unstructured qualitative analysis or what discipline they come from, common themes running through each of the works included here are the importance of *reflexivity* and the role we play as *self-aware researchers*. As we travel, or meander, towards substantive and meaningful research conclusions, it is this self-awareness that enables qualitative research to be simultaneously grounded in data and filtered by thoughtful analysis. To conclude, we hope you enjoy these authors' ruminations on and instructions for qualitative analysis and that they inspire you to new ways of considering and practicing qualitative research.

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Chapter One

The Expectations and Realities of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Reflections from a PhD Study

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ABSTRACT
In this discussion, I consider the way qualitative analysis is framed in methods textbooks and how they encourage us to think about the analytical process. Based on my reflections as a PhD student, I suggest that textbooks give the misleading impression that qualitative analysis is a straightforward, linear process, and that it is vastly more complex than is implied in these sources. I also reflect on the tendency to see different analytical approaches as providing you with different types of analysis. By distinguishing between the ideas that we apply to our methods and those that are more the product of them, I argue that it is the interplay between these two ways of generating ideas that constitute our analysis. I suggest that we need to be more honest about how we do qualitative analysis and recognise that what we see in textbooks is a particular representation of the analytical process.

KEYWORDS
Qualitative analysis; expectations; realities; textbooks.

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative analysis is a challenging process. There are many different ways to make sense of qualitative data, with different methods and techniques used for different research purposes. When doing qualitative analysis for the first time, it can be easy to get lost amongst the various approaches available to you, each with its own theoretical framework, technical procedures and analytical outcomes. For many of us, but particularly graduate and PhD students, we rely heavily on methods textbooks to learn about these different approaches and how to use them in our own research[1]. Because these resources often form the basis of our technical knowledge, our expectations of what qualitative analysis looks like, and how to do it, largely comes from the way authors frame and represent it in their writing.

[1] I use the terms 'textbooks' and 'texts' to refer to all publications on qualitative research methods.

In this discussion, I want to consider the way methods are presented in textbooks and how they make us think about qualitative analysis. I suggest that textbooks, for reasons discussed below, give the misleading impression that the analytical process is a relatively simple, step-by-step process, that encourages us to wrongly assume that following analytical techniques by the book is the correct way to do qualitative analysis. As I will discuss, in practice the analytical process is far more complicated than is construed in textbooks. Following on from that, I will examine what I feel is a tendency in qualitative inquiry (including methods textbooks) to think of different analytical approaches as 'giving' or 'providing' you with different types of analysis. In other words, the inclination to see your method as determining the kinds of analytical products you produce (e.g. theories, models, themes, 'thick analyses' (Fosket, 2015)). Reflecting on my own analytical process, it is perhaps unsurprising to suggest that our analysis is not solely the result of the method we are using. It is also shaped by the ideas and interests that we bring to the process. By making the distinction between the ideas that are 'applied to' our methods of analysis, and those that are more the 'product of' them, I argue that it is these two ways of generating ideas that ultimately forms our analysis.

This discussion is intended to be a reflexive piece about some of the concerns I have had about the analytical process during the first two years of my PhD. In my work, I aim to develop a sociological account of how and why people come to be labelled, or to label themselves, as autistic in adulthood. To do so, I am collecting data using qualitative interviews and analysing them using an approach called situational analysis (Clarke, 2005). Managing the apparent disconnect between the way methods are presented in textbooks and the way we actually do qualitative analysis is something that I, my colleagues, and I suspect many others have tried to navigate over the course of their research. This is therefore a broad discussion about qualitative analysis as a whole, not just situational analysis. Whilst I recognise that this can be tricky with so many different techniques and approaches at our disposal, from my experience of talking to others using a variety of methods, there are common themes around the analytical process that can be discussed at a more general level. The issues discussed here are things that researchers of all experience will be aware of. There is nothing new or anything ground-breaking on offer. Instead, this is an honest reflection about some of the things that have occupied much of my headspace as a PhD student, and I hope that sharing some of these observations will reassure others in a similar position. For those embarking on qualitative analysis for the first time, I will end with a few suggestions about how to approach what we see in textbooks and the analytical process more generally.

EXPECTATIONS OF HOW TO DO QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Methods of analysis are presented in textbooks in very particular ways. Generally speaking, when authors describe an analytical approach, there is a strain towards coherence and accessibility, and a tendency to oversimplify the process (Clarke, Friese, & Washburn, 2018). Whilst this may be the author's intention, particularly if they are pitching their text at novice researchers, in some ways it can feel like the author has deliberately withheld the complexity and messiness of qualitative analysis in favour of presenting a more clear and concise method. When you look at the rationale for using a particular approach, the techniques used and the analytical tasks that need completing, they are all presented in a way that could be described as sanitised – trimmed and carefully prepared for publication (Law, 2004). They are presented in a way that gives the impression that moving from the raw data to a developing understanding of the thing you are studying, to ultimately a higher-level

interpretation, is a seamless and straightforward process, providing you follow the procedures outlined correctly. Even the hints and tips offered by authors in their Q&A section can be viewed as a simple case of troubleshooting issues. Thinking about this in Weberian terms, the depictions of methods in textbooks represent a kind of 'ideal type'; a construct that supposes that, in an ideal world, this is how you would analyse your data using this particular approach (Hekman, 1983). One of the ways in which this idealism is shown is in the way in which qualitative analysis is increasingly presented as a linear process (i.e. the '*n*' stages of analysis). Popular methods that take this approach include thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012), the various types of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), to name a few. By pointing out these approaches, I do not wish to single out these authors for criticism. Seeing the core components of an analytical task is a useful way to learn about methods, and all of these authors acknowledge that the implementation of their approach is not as straightforward as is implied in their textbooks. But what I am suggesting, to be absolutely clear, is that presenting qualitative analysis in this way implies a sense of order and coherence that is rarely accomplished in practice, which is something we do not recognise until we go through the process ourselves.

Seeing how methods are presented in textbooks shapes how we think about our own analytical process. We start to see methods as cookbook recipes that need to be followed one step at a time (Scambler, 2018). Like a set of culinary instructions, if you follow the method's recipe correctly, you will end up with a finished analysis that looks something like the type presented in the textbook. Not only does this way of thinking mechanise the analytical process, but it fosters the idea that following the analytical recipe faithfully and accurately is a sign of methodological rigour and empirical reliability (Scambler, 2010). As a result, we become fixated on following our chosen method the 'right' or 'correct' way, rather than seeing it as a flexible heuristic that can be used pragmatically to help us better understand the thing we are studying (Giddings, 2006). We come to the expectation that there is only one way, *the* way, to do our chosen method, and anxiety can start to seep in when our analysis strays from that outlined in the textbooks.

It is perhaps unsurprising that when we sit down to analyse our own data that we notice a disconnect between what we see in the textbooks and the realities of actually doing it. Speaking from my own experience, although I am sure this is the case for many people, it is only when you start to look at the data that you have collected that you get a sense of the scale, breadth and complexity of the task ahead of you. Ambitions of seamlessly moving from one analytical task to another are quickly dashed when you are faced with a mass of transcripts, field notes, observations and recordings on your desk, and you ask yourself the question: "what now?". Depending on your chosen method, some analytical tasks might spring to mind to get your analysis moving. You may find yourself stumbling around at the start line for a few weeks not knowing how or where to start your analysis. Moving further ahead, you might find yourself bogged down on a particular analytical task, or perhaps you are going backwards, repeating previous tasks in light of your evolving thinking on the topic or a newfound sense of purpose or motivation. Some tasks may be so boring and monotonous that they fail to spark any creative insight in your thinking, and you move onto a task that is more purposeful and rewarding (I will return to the importance of doing the boring tasks shortly). For those a little more interested in methods, you may play around with the analytical technique itself and try something a little off-script from that presented in the textbook. The point is that qualitative analysis is rarely a series of linear tasks, but rather a run of hundreds of small and often unplanned stumbles through the data that take you sideways, backwards, nowhere and sometimes (hopefully) forwards. There may be a series of

tasks that make up an analytical method, but rarely are these tasks completed one after the other, if completed at all.

Why is there this disconnect between what we read and what we end up doing? I have some suggestions based on my own reading of different textbooks and attendance at various courses on qualitative methods. In part, I feel it has something to do with the way methods are communicated using the medium of print. Authors need to present methods in clear and concise terms, and it can be difficult to articulate the complexities of a particular approach using a one-way form of communication (McLuhan, 1964). The printed word crystallises the ideas authors are trying to communicate, which are often fluid and constantly evolving (especially when you see how methods develop in later editions of textbooks). What we read appears to us as rigid, unchanging and final, and this hides the messy reality of actually implementing the method in our work. Because we rely so heavily on textbooks due to the limited opportunities for qualitative research training, we find ourselves in a position where what we see in textbooks is essentially gospel. They are the major and sometimes only source of technical knowledge available, which provides little space for us to explore the complexities and nuances of methods in practice. What we see is what we get, and this is what we run with in our own analysis. Finally, and this is a point that takes me to the second half of the discussion, there is a tendency in textbooks for authors to position their methods in ways that make them seem novel and different. Within the grounded theory literature, which is my chosen methodological approach, there are many authors pitching alternative versions of the method (e.g. 'Glaserian', 'Straussian', 'Charmazian' and 'Clarkeian' approaches (Apramian, Cristancho, Watling, & Lingard, 2017)), and they do so in ways that make it appear drastically different from those before it. They present it as a method with new techniques and procedures that, if done in the correct way, *will ultimately produce a different type of analysis* from that of the other approaches. We therefore follow these procedures diligently with the expectation that we will produce something like that presented in the textbooks. The fact of the matter is that qualitative analysis can be a stupendously messy and disorganised process. Whilst our chosen method provides a useful guide about how to move through our data, the reality is that we conduct our analyses in ways that rarely resemble the processes outlined in the textbooks. What we read is a particular representation of a method, and not a like-for-like account of how our own analysis will unfold. How *we* decide to implement our chosen method determines what our analytical process looks like.

HOW WE USE METHODS TO CONSTRUCT OUR ANALYSIS

I want to frame the idea of different methods providing different types of analysis alongside the notion that qualitative research is an active process carried out by an active researcher (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). This relates to the idea that we, as researchers, contribute to the analytical process in important ways by drawing on our own knowledge and experiences to make sense of the things that we are studying (Holstein & Gubrium, 2016). As sense-making beings, we cannot help but draw on what we already know to shape the analytical products of our research. That is why there is a growing consensus within the qualitative research literature that researchers actively formulate and construct their analyses, rather than 'find' or 'discover' something that is already 'out there' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Phrases like "themes do not emerge" resist the temptation to see qualitative analysis as something that naturally unfolds during the analytical process, but rather, to view it as a product of

the researcher's own engagement with their data[2]. We do not hit upon our analysis, but create and craft it through detailed and scrupulous interactions with our data.

In trying to make sense of the role researchers play in the analytical process, it seems that the ideas surrounding the activeness of the researcher are very subtly bound within the assumption that our analysis is determined by the methods we use. Returning to grounded theory as an example, it is suggested in textbooks that if you use the 'Glaserian' or 'Charmazian' version of the method, you will produce an analysis that focuses on different social processes that are either objectively present in the world (Glaser, 1978) or socially constructed (Charmaz, 2014). If you use Clarke's (2005) version of the method, situational analysis, you will have an analysis that centres on the relational ecologies of situations and social worlds. There are also other versions that enable you to theorise the various dimensions of social practice between individuals and collective groups (Schatzman, 1991). Each one of these approaches is presented as a method that will give you something different, a unique and distinct analysis. The same is true when making comparisons between different analytical approaches. A thematic analysis will produce something entirely different from a discourse analysis, and depending on what type of thematic analysis you use, your reading of the data will be more inductive (e.g. Patton, 1990) or theoretical (e.g. Hayes, 1997) in nature.

I believe there exists a tension between the notion of an active researcher, who is constantly and unashamedly trying to make sense of their data, and the idea that different methods produce different types of analysis. Whilst many authors are acutely aware of the agency of the researcher, there is still the tendency for even the most reflexive of authors to give the impression (probably unintentionally) that a particular method of analysis – *their* method of analysis – will provide a certain analytical product, like it is the method itself, not the researcher's use of it, that produces the final analysis. Thinking about this in terms of social theory, this is a very structuralist way of thinking about qualitative analysis. It implies that whilst the researcher actively constructs the analysis through their engagement with their data, they do so within the structural confines of the method they are using (Giddens, 1984). From this point of view, the researcher is active, but only to a point. As a consequence of this kind of thinking, there is the expectation in institutions like mine (a medical school) that researchers should be able to demonstrate how their analysis is the result of the method they are using. In other words, we are expected to show how our choice of method determines the theories and explanations we develop as part of our analysis. This conforms to what I see as a structuralist way of thinking about methods, and one that I suspect is held unknowingly by many qualitative researchers. The notion that our analysis is bound by the method we use is incorrect and misleading, and I feel some clarity is needed about where our ideas come from.

Looking at my own analysis, it is clear that there is a distinction between the ideas that are 'applied to' my method, and those that are more the 'product of' them. The ideas that I apply to situational analysis are those that I have about the topic precisely because I have immersed myself in a particular area of research; collecting data, reading books, making notes and talking it through with others. This is me actively making sense of things and gradually becoming more sensitive to my research topic. We all generate ideas like this, and when it comes to formally analysing our data, *we filter these ideas through analytical tasks in a top-down fashion*. Some ideas will continue to stick around and evolve, others will not. For those parts of my analysis that are more the product of my method, they have come about because I am using a particular approach with an assortment of analytical techniques. My

[2] "Themes do not emerge" is an increasingly popular phrase used by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke that applies equally to other methods of analysis, not just their version of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

use of situational analysis has opened up my data in new and unexpected ways, which has mobilised my analytical thinking as a result. These ideas have come *from the ground up, through the method itself*. Although I have yet to explicitly acknowledge this, different methods of analysis *do* offer us different ways to look at our data. My point is that methods alone do not determine the shape of our analysis. Rather, it is these two ways of generating ideas that comprise our analysis. I realise that I am essentially making an argument for analytical abduction (Strubing, 2007), but I am specifically talking about where our analysis comes from in relation to our use of qualitative methods, and not the epistemological concerns of induction and deduction. I will try to illustrate this difference by drawing on two strands of my own analysis. I will keep the substantive details to a minimum, partly because they are work in progress, but also because I want to keep the focus on how I have used my method of analysis to generate different kinds of ideas.

Early in my data collection, I became interested in the idea of autistic people apparently being able to spot other people with autism. It was an idea prompted by my first interview participant who, at the end of our discussion, made a passing remark about being able to see autistic traits in others. "I could see it in them", they told me. This idea was a profound one, and one that I mulled over for some time, reading articles on similar behaviours, talking it through with my colleagues and supervisors, and writing detailed memos about it on my computer[3]. 'Spotting autism' has since formed a cornerstone of my data collection and thinking about my study. It is an idea that I have applied to the techniques of situational analysis, which have helped me flesh it out considerably since that first interview. There are now many components to the idea that are being explored through further data collection. When thinking about where this idea came from, it was something that came from that conversation with my participant, which I pondered on for a long time before conducting any formal data analysis. Spotting autism was something I was thinking about prior to data analysis, but through the analytical process, the idea has gained more substance and depth. If I were using a different method of analysis, say conversation analysis, the emphasis of my analysis would undoubtedly be different – I might focus on how people talk about spotting autistic people by examining the structure and content of what they say – but the substance of the analysis would almost certainly be the same.

In contrast, my analysis around the 'the right to self-define as autistic' (or any other social identity, like defining oneself as transgender, for example) is certainly something that came about because I am using situational analysis. The primary analytical work in situational analysis is making and analysing three different kinds of maps: situational maps, social worlds & arenas maps, and positional maps. After reading the relevant textbooks, I really struggled to get to grips with the third type of map, positional maps. To me, they seemed counter-intuitive and a little bit formulaic in their process[4]. Because this task failed to spark any creative thinking, I brushed over them fairly quickly and focused my attention on the other two maps, where I felt I was getting somewhere with my analysis. Fortunately, I was due to attend a series of workshops on situational analysis where I was expected to present some positional maps of my own. With an air of panic, and somewhat reluctantly, I quickly drafted six positional maps that broadly reflected the data I had collected and my thinking about them. During the last-minute scramble, and over the course of the workshops, I realised that forcing myself to create these maps opened up my data in distinct and important ways. One of these new avenues was the debates surrounding the right to self-define as autistic, and the competing arguments that it is not for lay people to decide if they have autism, but rather medical professionals. Creating positional maps had bought these ideas to my attention (unlike spotting autism, which was something that *I*

[3] See Charmaz (2015: pp.162-192) for more information on writing research memos.
[4] See Clarke et al. (2018: pp 165-174) for more information on positional maps.

bought to the analysis). Would I have developed this line of inquiry using a different method? It is hard to say. But in this instance, and in many others like it, this idea came about and took shape pricisely because I was pulling apart and analysing my data using positional maps.

By recognising the distinction between the parts of our analysis that are applied to our methods, and those that are more the product of them, we see that the analytical process is a dynamic interplay between the thinking and musing of an active researcher, and their use of the tools and techniques available to them. Analytical methods can help us organise and refine our thinking (as in the case of spotting autism), but they can also be used to provoke and construct new ideas (like the right to self-define). *Our analysis is not exclusively the product of our methods, nor is it accomplished without them*. Whilst this may be stating the obvious, it is a sentiment that is often lost when authors present their methods in their textbooks, and when we report our analytical process in our writing.

CONCLUSION

We face many expectations about how to do qualitative analysis. Some of these come from the way methods are presented in textbooks. We can get hung up on trying to emulate idealised versions of data analysis, whose neat and orderly processes often fail to materialise when we sit down to analyse our own data. We must remember that what we see in textbooks is a particular representation of the analytical process, packaged in a way to help authors communicate the core components of their approach. Whilst our chosen method can play an important part in shaping what our analysis looks like, it is our use of methods – filtering ideas through them as well as using them to develop new ones – that ultimately determines the analytical products we produce.

For those new to qualitative inquiry, I would like to end with some suggestions about how to approach the analytical process in light of some of the issues raised in this discussion. As Adele Clarke (2005) recommends, you should see your method of analysis as a buffet at a restaurant. Take a walk up to the table and have a look and see what is on offer. Is there anything that you like the look of? Which bits of the method do you feel will help you get a grip on your data in productive and exciting ways? Which bits do you not like the look of? Maybe you could give them a try? You never know, you might end up really liking them, as I found with positional maps. In pragmatic terms, take what you need from your methods and justify your decisions (Strubing, 2007). Do not get fixated on following what you see in the textbooks. Next, make sure that you leave a trail of breadcrumbs in your writing for others to see how you moved through the analytical process. This means revealing how you proceeded from your data to your final analysis, and taking the time to discuss which ideas you were already playing with and how you fleshed them out using your chosen method. This requires honest reflection about how we are doing qualitative analysis *in reality*, rather than simply referring to your chosen method as is so often the case in publications. Honestly reflecting on our own practice and reporting it in writing will go a long way to demystify the analytical process for those unsure what to do. Finally, do not shy away from the bread and butter of qualitative analysis – simply mulling over your data, writing about it and talking about it with others. This is really important work. Whilst it might not feel like ‘proper’ qualitative analysis, this is where some of the big leaps in your thinking are made. We should not be ashamed to report how our musings, used in conjunction with our methods of analysis, enable us to arrive at the analytical products we develop. From my experience, this is what qualitative analysis looks like.

NOTES

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Chapter Two

Generating credible evidence of social impact using the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP): The challenge of positionality in data coding and analysis

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ABSTRACT
The paper reflects on action research into the use of a qualitative impact protocol (the QuIP) to conduct commissioned evaluations of the social impact of development interventions in complex contexts. Unusually, the QuIP unbundles the tasks of data collection and analysis. This can enhance the transparency and auditability of the evaluative process, and hence its credibility to users, but also accentuates the importance of reflection on the analyst's positionality. With sufficient safeguards, we argue that the approach opens up new opportunities for generating qualitative evidence to influence development practice. The paper first describes the QuIP and its approach to coding and analysis. It then reflects on the challenges analysts face, emphasising that positionality relates not only to their personal characteristics but also to how their role is structured in relation to that of other stakeholders.

KEYWORDS
Coding; impact evaluation; positionality; qualitative data analysis

INTRODUCTION

How far is it possible to thematically code qualitative data 'reliably' - or in a way that another person could closely replicate by repeating the exercise? 'Qualitative' can loosely be distinguished from 'quantitative' as being primarily concerned with seeking meaning from words, rather than facts from numbers. It follows from this definition that perfect replication in the analysis of text is neither feasible nor necessarily desirable, as it would entail supressing cultural differences in human interpretation from which we can learn. However, this is not to say that the users of an analysis will or

should find anybody's thematic coding performance equally credible. Who we are unavoidably affects how we code; but this does not absolve us from scholarly effort and rigour in our efforts to draw out themes from the data. Potential routes to improved credibility include being both more open about how we code, and more reflexive about how our performance is influenced by prior knowledge, cognitive biases, self-interest and error as well as personal values and culture. This is what this paper seeks to do.

The Qualitative Impact Protocol or 'QuIP' is an approach to social impact assessment developed under an ESRC-DFID research grant between 2012 and 2015 at the Centre for Development Studies, University of Bath.[1] The research aimed to stimulate innovation in collection, analysis and use of qualitative data to evaluate the impact of specific interventions with human development goals. This sets our discussion somewhat apart from pure social research, because coding and thematic analysis is being conducted to achieve an evaluative goal set by the commissioner of the study, who is often also a funder or direct stakeholder in the actions being evaluated – as depicted in Diagram 1. While this context is distinct from much social research, it is of interest as a deliberate attempt to promote the credibility of qualitative social research to inform public action.

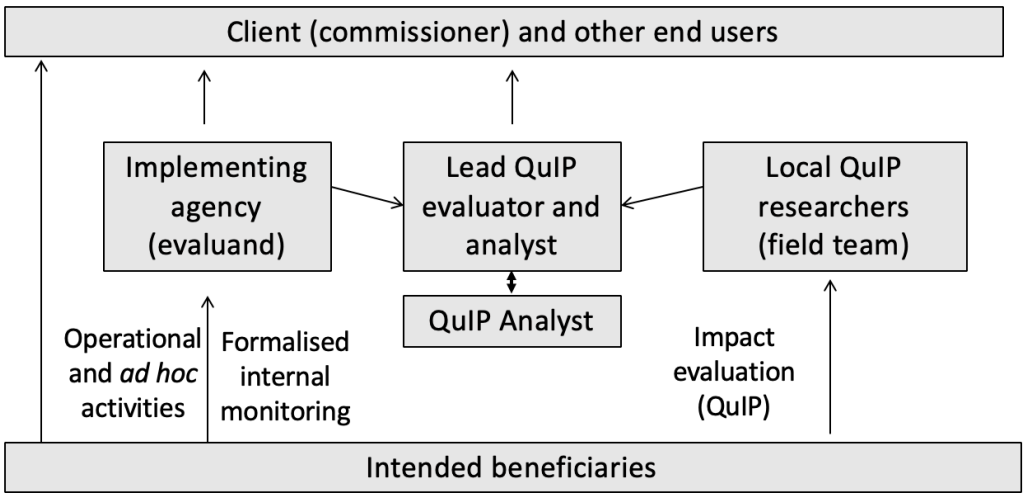

Figure 1: Choreography of the QuIP: who are we coding for?

More specifically, the QuIP aimed to address the challenge of assessing the impact of specified interventions (referred to for convenience as 'projects') in complex contexts and in a way that is not only credible, but also cost-effective and timely. Rather than building causal claims through statistical inference based on variable exposure of respondents to the chosen project, the QuIP relies on narrative evidence of the causal drivers of change obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. It has been designed and tested to mitigate against potential response bias (see Copestake *et al.*, 2018), as well as to meet often stringent time and cost constraints in both data collection and analysis. Following completion of the initial research in 2015 the QuIP was further promoted and adapted under commercial conditions by independent non-profit company – Bath Social and Development Research Ltd (see www.bathsdr.org). This was set up specifically to pursue the goal of constructively 'disrupting' prevailing impact evaluation practice. This paper

[1] More information about the QuIP and its use to date can be found in a recently published book, Attributing Development Impact: The QuIP Casebook (Copestake *et al.*, 2019) - also available online at bit.ly/QuIP-OA

focuses on the coding and analysis part of the QuIP process, developed and refined whilst working through qualitative data from 935 individual respondents and 130 focus group discussions that formed part of more than 30 discrete evaluation studies undertaken by BSDR Ltd between 2015 and 2018 (Copestake *et al.* 2019). The authors between them draw on direct involvement with all of these studies, and were directly responsible for coding and analysis of more than half of them.

QUIP CODING AND ANALYSIS – AN OVERVIEW

The QuIP aims to collect rich and credible evidence of the causal links between a selected project and changes in the self-perceived wellbeing of its intended beneficiaries by providing them with an opportunity to describe their experiences in an open-ended way. QuIP studies generally rely on a mixture of semi-structured interviews with individuals, focusing on their personal and/or household level experiences, and focus group discussions, segmented by age and gender, reflecting on perceived changes within a defined locality or community.

Data collection is carried out by independent researchers located close to the study area, who are informed as little as possible about the project being assessed and the organisation responsible for it. The purpose of this *blindfolding* is primarily to reduce potential for pro-project bias on the part of respondents, including their response to cues from the researchers. Individual respondents and focus group participants are asked a series of open-ended, non-project specific questions about changes they have experienced within a specified time period, organised according to selected *domains* of their lives, livelihoods, and/or wellbeing. These domains depend on the type of project being implemented and are agreed between the lead evaluator and commissioner of the study taking into account anticipated areas of project impact. Most questions are open-ended, aiming to elicit respondents' own account of both what has changed in each domain and why. During the individual interviews (but not focus groups) discussion of each domain ends with one or more closed questions to clearly establish the respondent's own assessment of whether their overall wellbeing in this domain changed for better or worse during the specified time period. This provides a useful snapshot of respondents' overall experience of change, and helps to close each section of the interview or focus group discussion prior to moving on to discuss another domain. Table 1 illustrates the kind of data this generates, and its role in providing an overview of respondents' experience of change by domain.

Code	Gender	Age	1. Food production	2. Cash income	3. Cash Spending	4. Food consumption	5. Assets	6. Overall Wellbeing
TG1	Female	33	+	+	+	+	+	+
TG2	Male	38	-	-	-	+	+	+
TG3	Male	37	+	+	+	+	+	+
TG4	Female	52	+	-	-	=	-	+
TG5	Female	52	-	-	-	=	-	-
TG6	Female	40	-	=	+	+	+	+

Table 1. Illustrative table of responses to closed questions (self-evaluation of overall change over a specified period in each of six pre-specified domains).

Detailed notes on each interview are written-up by the independent researchers, who receive training and guidance on the style and quality of interviewing being sought, including the emphasis on 'why' questions to elicit stories of change rich in causal statements. This is a highly skilled task, with data quality depending on many factors, including understanding of how causal statements (and the counterfactuals implicit within them) are constructed and interpreted in different cultures and languages. However, this is not the subject of the current paper, which focuses instead on the analysis stage of QuIP studies.[2]

Responsibility for the quality of the study then passes to a designated analyst - a deliberate separation of roles to accommodate differences in both positionality and skills required for data collection and data analysis. The QuIP enables trained analysts to apply a standard approach to coding different datasets to identify patterns and provide an overview of findings.

As with other forms of thematic analysis (e.g. Clarke and Braun, 2017), assessment of the data can be divided into several steps. These include: (a) familiarisation with all the data by reading and rereading it; (b) allocation of segments of the texts to different codes; (c) identification of wider themes, stories or arguments that may combine different coded elements together; (d) back-checking these themes, and the clusters of coded data supporting them, against the original data; (e) reporting findings to others. This process is rarely strictly linear, and step (d) serves as a particular and important reminder that the analytical process is fluid and iterative. At the same time, the QuIP does more narrowly define the analyst's role, thereby distinguishing it from social research in which the same person conducts both data collection and thematic analysis.

Another distinctive feature of the QuIP is that the analyst's task is to code segments of the data that make *causal claims*: e.g. that 'X caused Y', or 'Y happened because of X and Z'. They do this by tagging such statements in three ways: (i) as a *driver of change*, based on inductive classification of different reasons behind any change or outcome; (ii) as an *outcome*, based mainly on inductive classification; (iii) as an *attribution* claim, based on predetermined codes that provide an initial indication of the strength of the attribution claim.

The analyst builds a set of codes for drivers of change and outcomes uniquely for every study, doing so inductively from the evidence presented in the narrative statements. To do this the analyst does not need to be familiar with the project or its theory of change: indeed, an initial round of inductive data coding when the analyst has not yet reviewed material about the project adds to the rigour of the analysis. However, subsequent rounds of refining codes and identifying linking themes need to draw on background information about the project, given that the final goal of most QuIP studies is to interrogate project theory (and commissioners' prior expectations of its impact) using the data on how respondents perceive it.

Attribution codes, which summarise this interrogation, are the same for all studies, as shown in Table 2. The positive or negative ascription draws on respondents' own perception, whereas the analyst plays a more active role in distinguishing between causal links that are: explicitly attributed to project activities (1,2); implicitly consistent with project theory (3,4); or incidental to it (7,8). This part of the coding clearly does require the analyst to be as familiar as possible with project activities as planned

[2] Since the QuIP studies rarely fully transcribe interviews and focus groups (although they are generally recorded for quality assurance purposes) the field researchers positionality also relates to writing as well as interviewing skills. Copestake *et al.* (2018) reflects on the positionality of field researchers.

and actually implemented.

Description	Positive code	Negative code	Explanation
Explicit project link	1	2	Positive or negative change explicitly attributed to the project or to explicitly named project activities or project partners.
Implicit project theory of change link	3	4	Change confirming (positive) or refuting (negative) the specific mechanism (or theory of change) by which the project aims to achieve impact, but with no explicit reference to the project or named project activities.
Other (incidental) attributed	5	6	Change attributed to other forces (not related to activities included in the project's theory of change).
Other not attributed	7	8	Change not attributed to any specific cause.
Neutral	9		Responses that were felt to be of interest, not related to change.

Table 2. QuIP attribution coding key

Triple coding the data using this system makes it easier to produce tables and causal diagrams based on frequency counts of coded causal claims to provide an overview of what the study reveals about drivers of change, outcomes and (most importantly) the relationship between the two. These can both summarise how far the evidence confirms or contradicts prior expectations of the commissioner, and incorporate unanticipated drivers and outcomes. However, the semi-automated generation of a range of reports from the primary data has its limitations. Frequency counts provide only one indication of the importance of different coded drivers or outcomes; the emphasis respondents place on them also matters, including how often they are repeated in the same interview, as do the logical connections between different links and arguments. For these reasons, the analyst still has an important, active and reflexive role to play in deciding which outputs are most meaningful and how to complement summary reports with discussion and selected quotations.

To enhance flexibility in data analysis, the QuIP also incorporates a dashboard, which facilitates the process of choosing between an almost infinite set of possible tabulations and visualisations.[3] This helps to ensure that rich details in intended beneficiaries' individual responses are not irrevocably lost behind summary numerical data. Figures 2 to 4 illustrate the range of possible visualisations. Not shown, but critically important to the approach, is that the software permits the coded text underpinning each visualisation to be quickly recalled and reviewed. This permits the analyst, as well as users of the data, to move interactively between frequency counts portrayed as 'facts' and the underlying text and its meaning.

[3] For more see: http://bathsdr.org/about-the-quip/coding-and-visualisation/

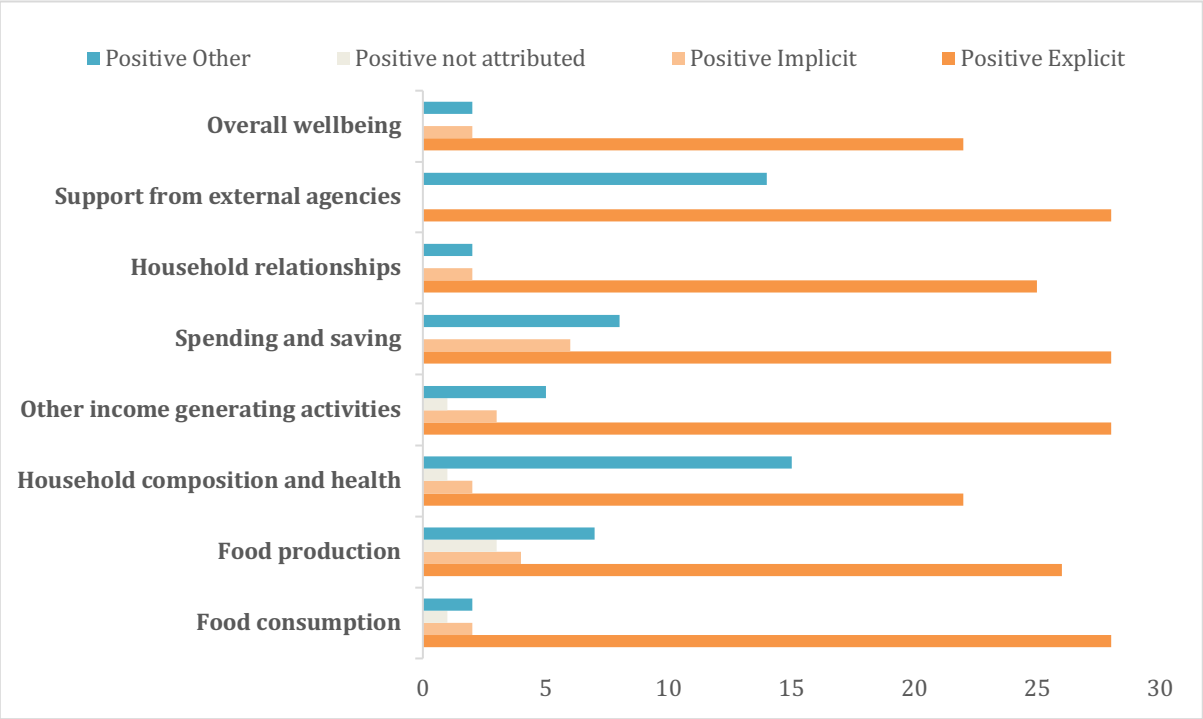

Figure 2. Illustrative chart of positive attribution responses by outcome domain (number of respondents per domain who made a positive reference, whether explicitly or implicitly referencing the intervention, or referencing something else).

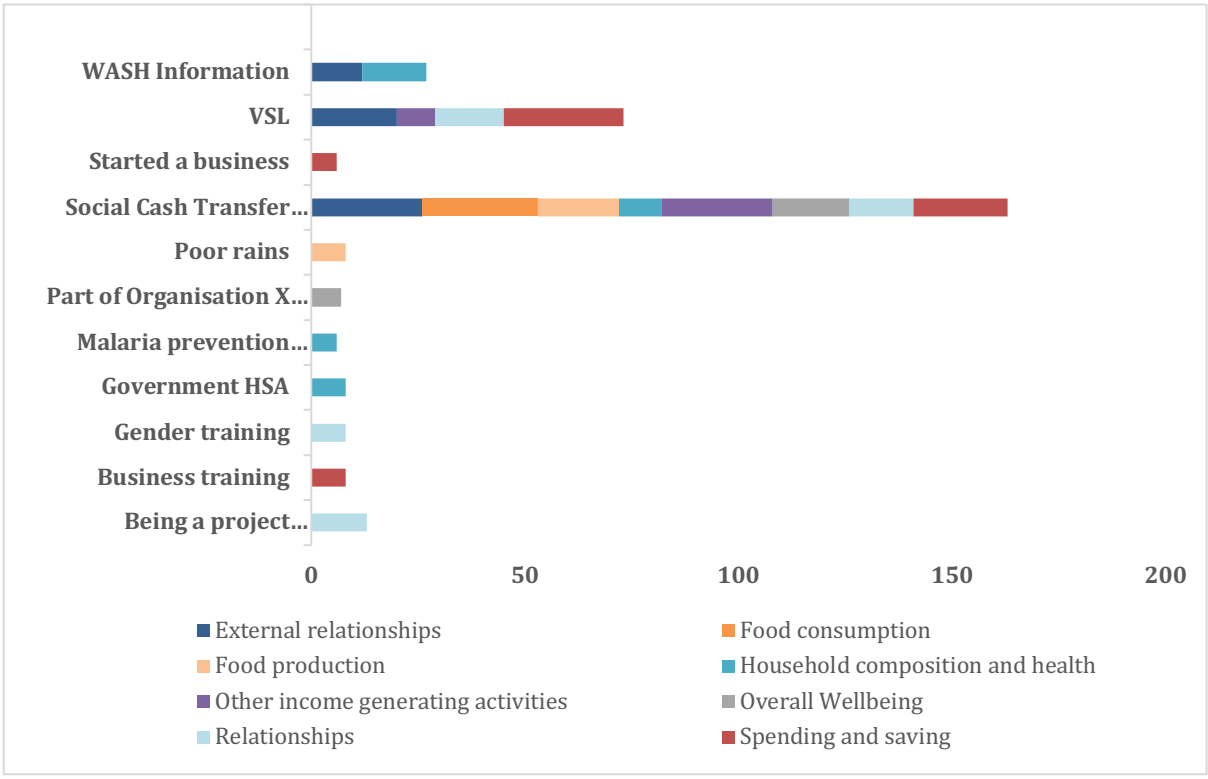

Figure 3. Illustrative chart of distribution of drivers of change across outcome domains (number of times each driver was mentioned in total, split by the domains it was mentioned in).

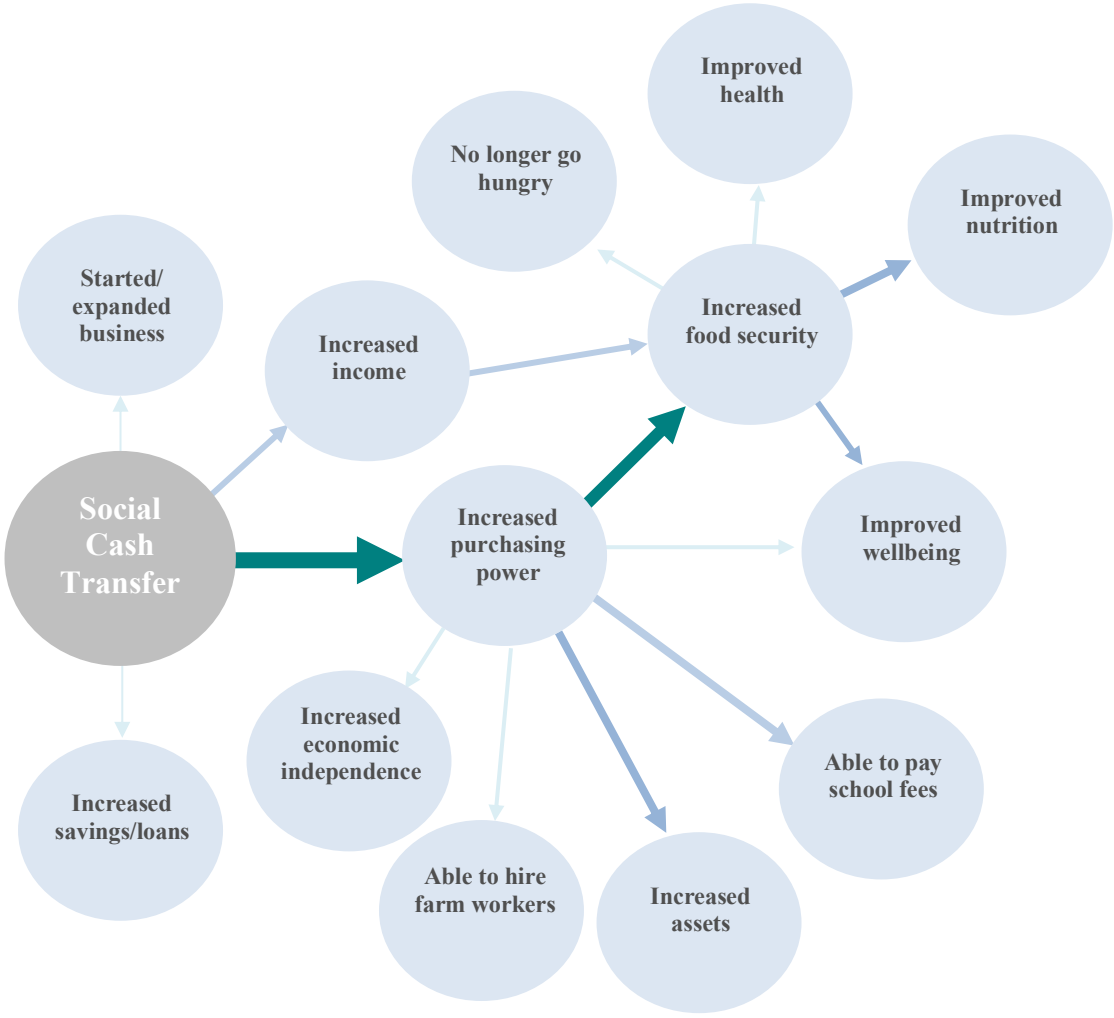

Figure 4. Illustrative diagram of relationships between drivers and outcomes (Note that the thickness of arrows denotes strength of relationship between driver and outcome, calculated by the number of times the driver and outcome were cited together).

THE ROLE OF THE QUIP ANALYST

While software development has greatly facilitated coding and analysis the tasks remain primarily manual and dependent on the analyst's active, skilled and reflective personal engagement with the data. The semi-standardised process of doing QuIP analysis increases the prospects of two analysts independently coming up with a similar analysis, particularly for a more *confirmatory* study (Copestake, 2014) that is testing a detailed theory of change. However, given that the QuIP is designed for evaluating multi-faceted projects in complex contexts it is also to be expected - indeed welcomed - that findings also reflect what the analyst brings to the task according to their personal background, discipline, experience and insight. This is particularly the case for more *exploratory* studies, primarily intended to generate new findings and insights, rather than to confirm whether the project is having the expected impact or not.

Here we identify five different activities that introduce 'messiness' into the analysis. First, there is the task of deciding how to group together and distinguish between different drivers and outcomes. This

includes choosing when and how to code causal drivers separately, or to treat them as synonymous or part of an integral package, based on judgements about whether one can exist independently of the other. This also depends on the degree of conceptual granularity or detail the analyst thinks will be of interest to users. Second, distinguishing between explicit, implicit and incidental drivers is often difficult because it hinges on just how specific narrative text needs to be about who is driving the identified change. Such coding judgements entail assessing discrete causal claims not in isolation but in the context of the full record of the interview or focus group. Third, the analyst has to choose between the almost infinite variety of tables and visual outputs than can be derived from any one coded dataset. This includes filtering the database to investigate variation in the nature and frequency of observed causal processes for segments of respondents: distinguishing, for example, between evidence collected from men and women, or through individual interviews and focus groups. Fourth, and perhaps most important of all, is the challenge of how to pull out a discrete set of overarching themes from the data (often linked to identification of a set of interconnected causal pathways) for emphasis in presentation and reporting of the 'findings'. This entails balancing what is unusual and what appears typical, taking into account that key users of the data will have limited time and attention spans. Fifth, and related to this, are decisions about whether to feature individual case studies and quotations, whether for illustrative purposes or because they are anomalous in interesting and challenging ways.

Coding and analysis can be facilitated by drawing on prior thinking of the commissioner, or project implementing agency, about the causal links from project activities and contextual factors (including constraints) to achieving desired outcomes across different domains and levels. However, there is a potential trade-off between more confirmatory analysis that is strongly guided by such theory, and more exploratory analysis that is more open to unanticipated drivers of change, outcomes and patterns identified from the data, and influenced by drawing on wider experience and from discussions with others. While analysts need to embrace the solitariness of losing or immersing themselves in the data, this is in tension with the need to consult others, particularly the field team in order to clarify aspects of the data. An important part of the art of the analysis is to be both *emic* and *etic*, inductive and deductive, immersed in and detached from the data at the same time: to simultaneously engage with nuanced detail and see the big picture. One indicator of an analyst's skill is their ability to balance these seemingly contradictory positions by both faithfully representing what respondents said and directly addressing how far a project achieved what it set out to do. The entails being systematic, picking out patterns (across the whole data set and within individual interviews), being able to write engagingly and paying attention to details while also rising above them to highlight key themes. In terms of attitude, a good analyst is reflexive, interested in the stories of others, open to critique and collaboration, and able to judge how and when to 'pass the baton' of interpretation on to users.

Who we are affects how we code and it is important to acknowledge and reflect on this, including personal background, history, knowledge, biases and blind spots. These influences combine with external factors and interaction with others involved in the study. Diagram 1, and the foregoing description of the QuIP, emphasised the separation of data collection and analysis, making it possible to employ analysts with the specific skills and attitudes referred to above, even if they lack the attributes, including language. However, the analyst's perspective remains influenced by a wide range of people and data, as illustrated by Diagram 5. While their core functional role is to receive transcripts and field reports from the field research team, and analyse them in relation to project theory and context, obtained mainly from project staff, in practice this role is mediated by a wealth of other influences. This suggests that the credibility of an analysis can be enhanced by being explicit not only about positionality in terms of their own social identity, experience, age, gender, ethnicity

and so on, but also about the other people and documents that influenced them. Borrowing from institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005) the diagram also depicts how influence and power over the analysts (as the central subject) is mediated both through individual relationships and through the authority vested in documents, including a project's 'theories of change', formal terms of reference agreed with the commissioner and the QuIP guidelines themselves.

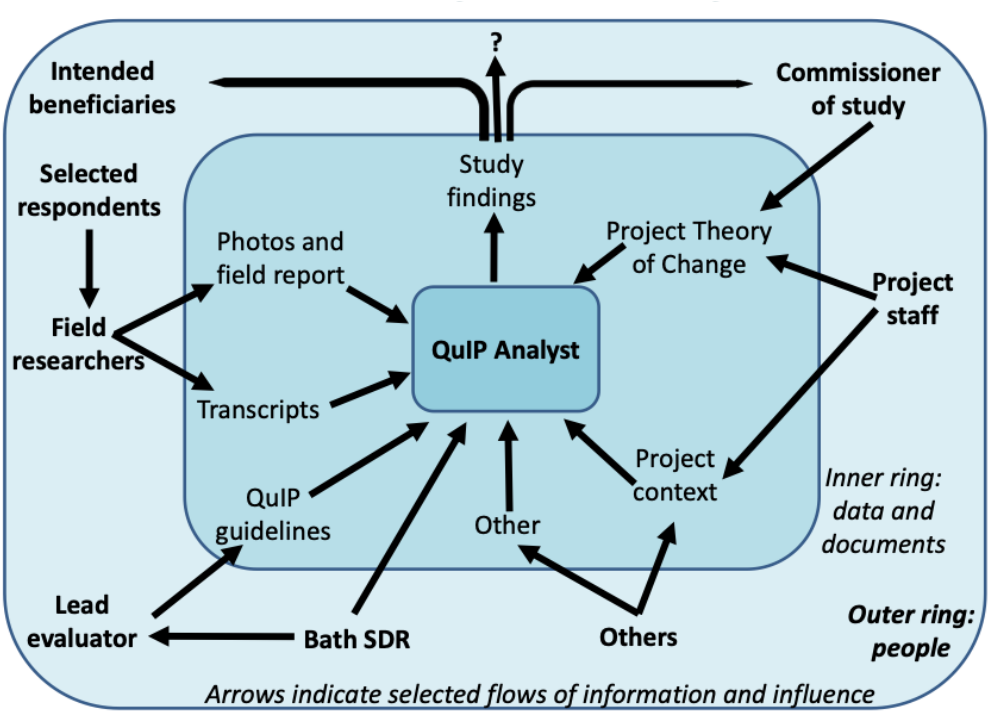

Figure 5. Positionality of the QuIP analyst

As with any impact evaluation, challenges and tensions are unavoidable; what matters is to be explicit about them and about how they are managed. The diagram illustrates that while many of these become apparent to the analyst through weaknesses in data and documentation, ultimately they are rooted in interpersonal relationships. The quality of interview and focus group notes is key to ensuring that the analyst can fully capture and code the stories of change described by the respondents. For every QuIP study undertaken, qualified and experienced local researchers are employed to conduct the interviews in the local language, and then to translate and summarise the responses. The research teams also write their own field report, which the analyst can refer to as an extra step in validating the coding and findings. However, it is critically important that research teams are also available after fieldwork finishes, so that the analyst can call upon them to answer queries relating to the data or to provide further information or clarifications needed to code effectively. For example, the analyst may seek explanations from the field team for variation in then length and detail of interview notes.

Likewise, there is often a need for follow-up clarification and gap filling with respect to project documentation, particularly to inform attribution coding. For example, even when set out explicitly project theories of change are often ambiguous (Davies, 2018), and lack detail about variation in project activities across the population of intended beneficiaries. Good communication is important with the immediate commissioners of a study, but they may nevertheless be too remote from what actually happened on the ground to answer specific questions about the project; and their ability to

persuade implementing staff supply supplementary information is also often limited. Securing such information depends in part on how far they have been informed of the study, and are comfortable with the methodological approach. If they feel invested in the study, and understand that the QuIP is capable of aiding and affirming their work (by revealing complexities and difficulties that may not have been apparent to commissioners further up a management or funding hierarchy, for example) then interaction during the analysis stage is easier and more productive. This applies not only to accurate reading and coding of data but also to its interpretation.

This discussion opens up for further analysis and reflection about the power relationships within which the work of the analyst is embedded. The analyst must reconcile meeting their own standards of professional conduct as a researcher with an obligation to deliver on what they have contractually agreed to do within time and budget. The commissioner's priority is to receive clear evidence of impact the project has had on intended beneficiaries within the agreed timeframe, while project staff may want to defend their own record. Managing these expectations is a delicate balancing act that can easily become messy. There is uncertainty over the scope for renegotiating terms of reference in response to the delays and shortfalls in receiving all the information the analyst needs. And tensions also arise through prevarication and delay over agreement of the final draft of the study, and receipt of full payment for it.

To mitigate these challenges and manage expectations, QuIP guidelines emphasise the importance of initial process of deliberation over the study, particularly between the lead evaluator and the commissioner, and ideally extending to other stakeholders also. By involving the commissioner in domain selection, sampling, recruitment of researchers and other details the hope is that contractual suspicion between commissioners and researchers can be replaced by a sense of common purpose and collaboration. A further strategy for reducing stakeholder tensions, as well as enhancing the utility of the work is to involve users in analysis of the coded data and/or sense-making workshops to explore findings and to discuss their implications. Using a summary dashboard can help to facilitate discussions, the transparency of the underlying data and coding process (subject to agreed steps to ensure the anonymity of respondents) helping to build trust and broaden scope for creative use of the data. This type of collaboration is also part of the way the QuIP can play a positive role in challenging a culture of conducting evaluations as a 'tick box' exercise that generates long reports that are rarely read or quickly buried and forgotten.

Diagram 6 sets out some of the potential difficulties that can contribute to prevarication and delay in completing a QuIP study. The core responsibility for managing these falls on the Lead Evaluator in close consultation with the commissioner. In most QuIP studies the role of lead evaluator and analyst has been separated, and this has the advantage of ensuring that the analyst is to some degree protected from being distracted - and even prejudiced - by managing multiple stakeholder relations.

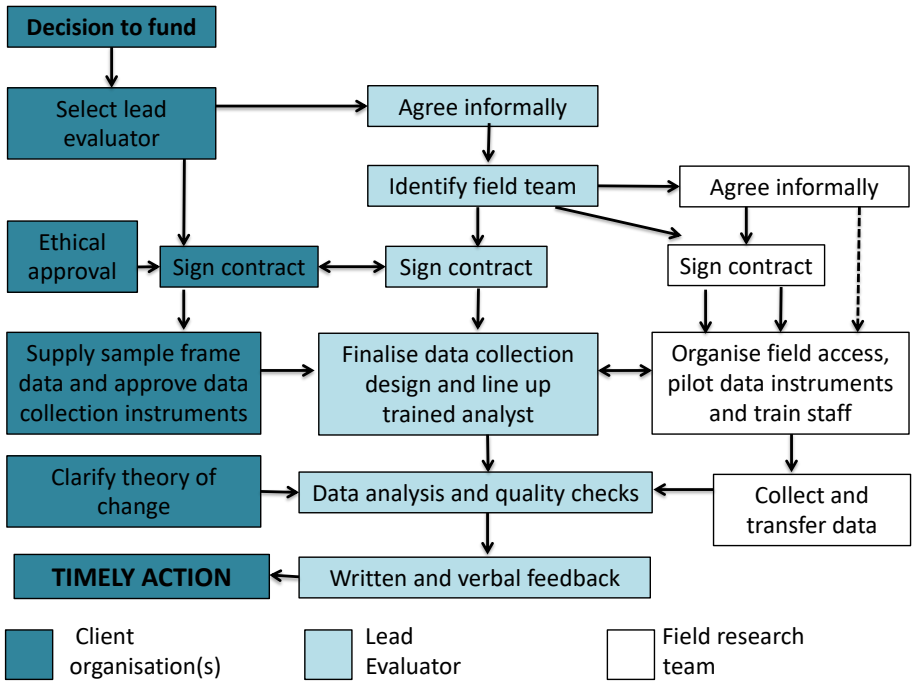

Figure 6. Contractual steps in conducting a QuIP study, and potential sources of delay.

CONCLUSIONS

The QuIP sets out a systematic and transparent approach to coding and analysis of qualitative data within the constraints arising from doing commissioned impact evaluation, rather than independent social research. There is no avoiding the messiness of dealing with data comprising diverse perceptions of complex processes of causation. But the division of labour within the QuIP can help to insulate the analyst from the messiness of contract management and associated stakeholder tensions. Our experience has been that the innovation of separating data collection, analysis and management tasks can also increase transparency and credibility of findings. More generally, this paper illustrates the point that the positionality of the analyst concerns not only their own personal identity and the subjectivity they bring to interpreting complex datasets, but also the way the way their relationship with other stakeholders is structured and managed.

A further dimension to this discussion concerns the character of the data itself. We started out by noting that the meaning behind text will always be open to multiple interpretation, not least due to the analyst's unique positionality, thereby limiting the likelihood and indeed desirability that coding and analysis will be perfectly replicated by two different analysts. At the same time, the QuIP does aim to add credibility to findings by imposing some discipline and transparency over coding. This and the use of frequency counts to visualise findings in different ways can create a false illusion of objectivity. An important task of the analyst is to guard against this by ensuring that these steps remain an aid to interpretation of what different respondents said and meant, rather than becoming a reductionist substitute for it. By partly demystifying the process of qualitative data analysis the QuIP aims to build credibility of such evidence in a way that is less dependent on the personal reputation of individual researchers. But researchers still need to ensure that near and precise presentation of

summary statistics and diagrams based on coded data is not allowed to obscure the underlying messiness and complexity of respondents' perceptions of what drives change in their lives.

Finally, it is also worth reflecting back on the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research with which this paper started. The QuIP is a qualitative approach because it deals primarily with words and their meaning, particularly how respondents narrate stories of change. However, this does not preclude using frequency counts and charts of coded items to aid (but never dictate) analysis and generalisation. This speaks to the utility of *integration* (rather than mere juxtaposition) of qualitative and quantitative forms of data in interpretive analysis. In the case of the QuIP this integration is greatly facilitated by being able to flip easily and quickly between numerically based data in a dashboard and the source text it represents.

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Chapter Three

Using framework analysis deductively: A case study from alcohol and tobacco tax policy and modelling research

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ABSTRACT
Deductive approaches to qualitative research can feel alien to qualitative researchers from all disciplines, especially where we have embraced the idea that our data has stories of its own to tell. However, in applied instrumental research, deductive qualitative studies play an important if often forgotten role. In this paper we focus on an example of deductive application of the framework method. We used this method to undertake a two-stage qualitative study as part of a wider interdisciplinary research project investigating options for changing alcohol and tobacco tax in England for the benefit of population health. Building on a rapid review of the literature, we embarked on joint qualitative interviews with policy experts where we relied explicitly on deductive structures for both data collection and analysis. This paper explores the specific process of using framework analysis deductively to begin to analyse our data. We conclude that deductive approaches are effective in time-limited instrumental applied research projects.

KEYWORDS
Framework; deductive; coding; analysis; public health, health economics

INTRODUCTION

The framework method for the analysis and management of data has been in use since the 1980s in large-scale social-policy research and has recently become increasingly popular in the health research field (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood 2013). As Gale et al., (2013) explain, framework analysis requires a matrix document in which columns are codes and rows are cases. This matrix is populated with summarised or reduced data abstracted systematically from coded interview transcripts. Analysis and interpretation are then undertaken by comparing cases in the matrix. One of the benefits of the framework method is that it is flexible in its capacity to accommodate inductive, deductive and mixed approaches to qualitative research data:

> *"…in the deductive approach, themes and codes are pre-selected based on previous literature, previous theories or the specifics of the research question; whereas in the inductive approach, themes are generated from the data though open (unrestricted) coding, followed by refinement of themes. In many cases, a combined approach is appropriate when the project has some specific issues to explore, but also aims to leave space to discover other unexpected aspects of the participants' experience or the way they assign meaning to phenomena. In sum, the Framework Method can be adapted for use with deductive, inductive, or combined types of qualitative analysis."*
> (Gale et al. 2013)

In this paper, we describe and consider the process of using framework analysis deductively with reference to a specific case – the 'Syntax' project.

Syntax aims to use a complex systems approach (Squires, Chilcott, Akehurst, Burr & Kelly 2016) to scope and model the effects and cross-effects of changes to alcohol and tobacco tax policy in England on population health. Both alcohol and tobacco use are major risk factors for cancers, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, with high mortality rates associated with both behaviours. In 2016, for example, nearly 78,000 deaths in England were attributed to tobacco use and over 5,500 to alcohol use (NHS Digital 2018a, 2018b). Alcohol and tobacco use are also highly comorbid and have multiplicative health risks when used concurrently (Verplaetse & McKee 2016). Funded by the National Institute of Health Research, the Syntax project aims to help policymakers understand the potential effects of changes to alcohol and tobacco taxation on population behaviour, disadvantaged groups and NHS costs. There is strong evidence that tax is an effective means of encouraging changes in consumption and associated harms (STAX 2018).

The qualitative analytical methods used in the scoping element of this interdisciplinary research project are the focus of this paper. The objective of the qualitative work was to identify and understand the range of relevant tax options available to policymakers from the perspective of research participants. This objective was conceived from 'soft systems methodology' theory, where participants' 'worldviews' and perceptions of both system feedbacks and understandings of the roles of different system actors are regarded as pertinent to the process of describing the system (Checkland 2000, Dalkin, Lhussier, Williams, Burton & Rycroft-Malone 2018) In reflecting on our methods, we aimed to describe and consider how deductive framework analysis can be used effectively in applied public health policy research. However, the paper presents ideas and lessons learned which are relevant across all disciplines which practice applied qualitative research. In the subsequent sections we: briefly describe our data collection method; present a two-stage process for constructing an analytical framework; and finally reflect on the ramifications for qualitative research arising from our research experience.

DATA COLLECTION

The qualitative arm of the Syntax project entailed two main elements. First, we conducted a rapid review of the UK literature on alcohol and tobacco tax policy which elicited policy options, objectives and evidence of effects. Rapid reviews are a simplification of the systematic review process and are intended to produce a synthesis of available knowledge more quickly (Tricco, Antony, Zarin, Strifler, Ghassemi, Ivory, Perrier, Hutton, Moher & Strauss 2015). Included literature (n=72) was limited to English language, published and grey literature published between 1997 and 2018 which referred to

specific alcohol and or tobacco tax policy options. The review revealed four main types of tax option: changes to excise duty rates, structural changes to excise duties, industry tax measures and hypothecation. We used this review to produce a briefing summarising the results (Hatchard and Buykx 2018).

Second, we shared the briefing with five alcohol and five tobacco tax policy experts and used it to structure five joint interviews with them. Participants were drawn from government, arms-length governmental bodies and advocacy groups from the UK. These were purposively selected on their proximity to policy decision-making and debates. Academic experts were excluded as they did not fulfil this criterion. The innovative joint interview design was intended to facilitate discussion between an expert in tobacco tax on the one hand and an expert in alcohol tax on the other regarding similarities, differences and possible interactions between these policy domains. Interviews were conducted during July and September 2018. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes, was recorded digitally and subsequently transcribed. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Sheffield University School of Health and Related Research Ethics Committee (ref. 017409, 2018). All interviewees provided consent for participation.

An interview protocol was used to conduct the semi-structured interviews. The protocol had three main components. First, we asked participants to share their overarching rationale or objectives for tobacco and/or alcohol tax policy (e.g. improve health, raise revenue). Second, we invited participants to discuss each of the four types of tax-related policy options identified in the rapid review briefing, beginning with the one or two which they most preferred to discuss. This part of the conversation was structured to encompass: i. technical specification of policies (e.g. a specific rate of taxation), ii. effects of the policy (e.g. on consumption, society, revenue); iii. cross-effects of the policy (e.g. on other products from the same sector, products from the other sector); iv. mediating factors which might affect policy outcomes (e.g. pre- or post-implementation); v. underlying evidence and evidence gaps. Third, participants were asked for their views on tax policy co-ordination across tobacco and alcohol (e.g. whether a good idea, practicalities, added value from separate tax regimes).

Third, before analysing the interview data, we returned to the rapid review where we undertook two additional steps. First, in the process of preparing for and conducting interviews, participants and colleagues had highlighted 38 possible additional papers. Of these, 19 met the inclusion criteria for the rapid review and data was abstracted from them. Second, in line with our research plan, we abstracted data on factors which mediate tobacco and/or alcohol tax policy from all included rapid review papers (n=91). We had not taken this step prior to interviews as we did not wish to bias our understanding of the mediating factors, preferring instead to hear more clearly the stories of participants. The redrafted rapid review provided us with a strong basis for developing our analytical framework.

DEDUCTIVE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

It may by now be apparent that the instrumental nature of the project – that being to identify and describe tax policy options and associated factors for quantitative modellers to subsequently test – to some degree predetermined the decision to develop our analytical framework deductively. The qualitative component of the Syntax project was carefully planned to map the relevant policy landscape and associated system complexities from stakeholders' perspectives. In doing so, we were

following Squires et al. (2016) in seeking to understand the problem and to used that understanding to inform modelling in an appropriate and evidence-based way. Thus, the project proposal and team were clear from the outset what information we wished to collate and examine. We developed our deductive analytical framework in two stages: 1. Coding; and 2. Charting.

Coding

Once all interviews were complete, we used the rapid review briefing and interview protocol to draft a deductive code sheet with named codes and definitions. The suitability of the codes was then tested in a single transcript coded by two authors, and minor changes were made to the code sheet following peer discussion. For example, new codes were added for consumer switching behaviour to capture participants' comments about what consumers might do in response to tax changes for alcohol, tobacco or both. Diagrammatic coding 'trees' were designed to support the coding process (Figure 1). The three trees cover the three coding components – Overarching Objectives, Jointness and Tax Options – of which the last was the most complex and multi-layered.

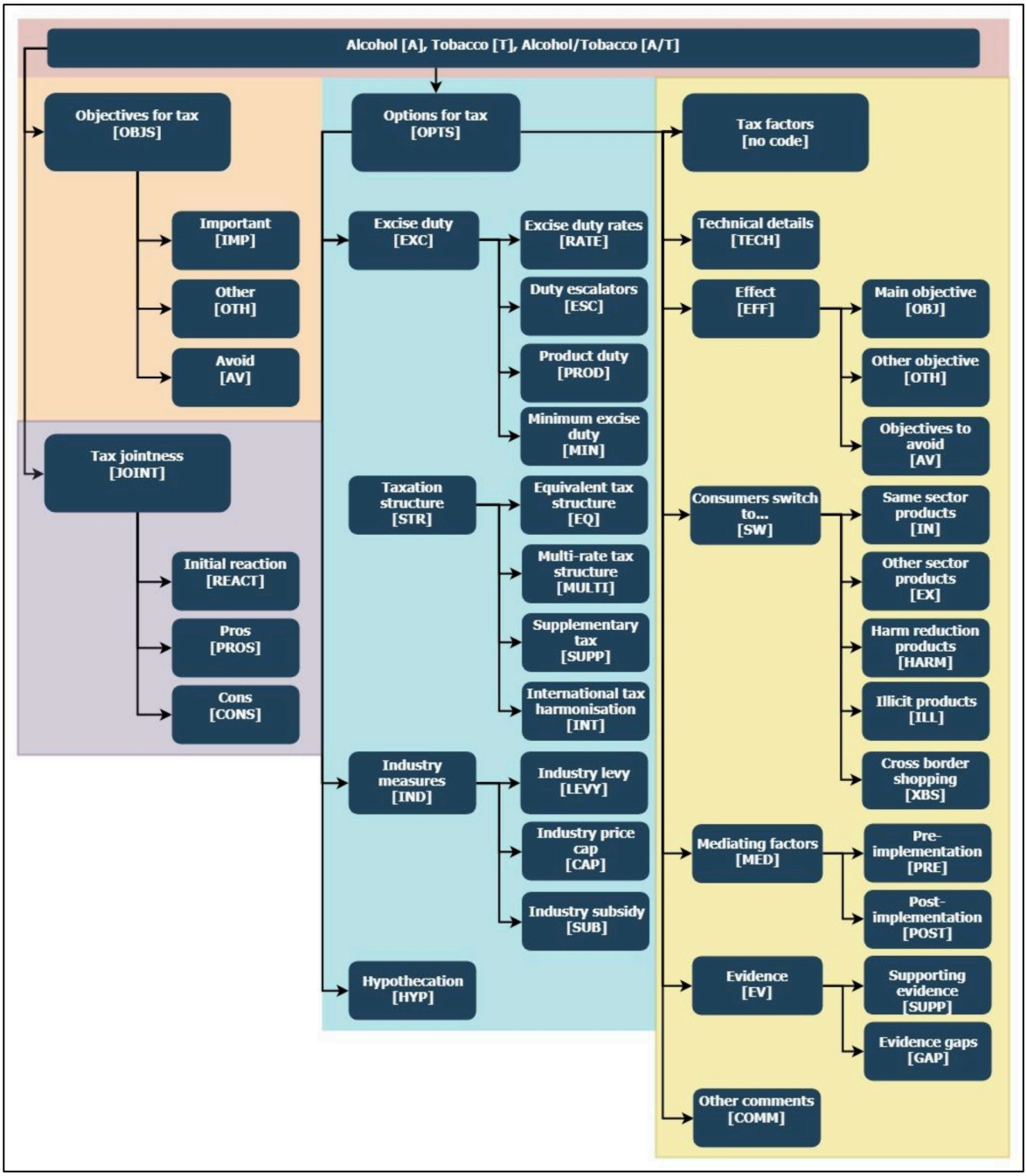

Figure 2. Syntax coding trees for tax objectives, jointness and options.

All transcripts were then coded in word processing software using the three-column table structure proposed by Gale et al. (2013): transcript in the centre column with underlining used to highlight key sections; codes and summary text in the left-hand column; notes in the right-hand column (Figure 2). To streamline the information recorded in column one, each coding category was assigned a short 'code' and all code combinations followed the same format: product type – coding category – tax type – tax sub-category – factor. For example, "A-OPTS-EXC-ESC-TECH" meant "alcohol–tax options–excise duty–duty escalator-technical description" (cf. Figure 1). This system enables us to retain all this information as variables which we would use in our analysis, but precluded the necessity of repeatedly typing lengthy complex codes in the left-hand column and allowed the transcripts to remain a manageable size.

Coding	Transcript	Notes & Ideas
A-OPTS-EXC-ESC-TECH/EFF-OBJ Introduce duty escalator to reduce affordability of alcohol and thereby reduce harm	B3: In an ideal world, however, we recognise that making alcohol less affordable is one of the most evidence-based solutions that governments can look towards to reduce harm. So introducing the duty escalator,which was abolished by George Osborne in 2012, is a campaign priority...at the moment.	Political context information here - relevant to code as mediating factors?

Figure 3. Example taken from Syntax coded transcript.

Charting

Again following Gale et al. (2013), the next step in developing our analytical framework was to "chart" the coded data. As described in our introduction, charting requires a matrix with "cases" in rows and "codes" in columns. We designed a 6-sheet chart in Excel. In all sheets, our ten participants appeared in rows using alpha-numeric identifiers. In sheet 1, columns provided space to record summary data on participants' objectives and ideas about joint alcohol and tobacco tax modelling and policy. Sheets 2-6 covered each of the four main tax option categories with an additional sheet for 'other' options raised by participants in interviews but not identified in the rapid review. In each of these sheets, columns provided space to record summary data on participants views of tax policy options as follows: i. technical detail; ii. effects; iii. consumer switching behaviours; iv. mediating factors; v. evidence; vi. other comments (Figure 3).

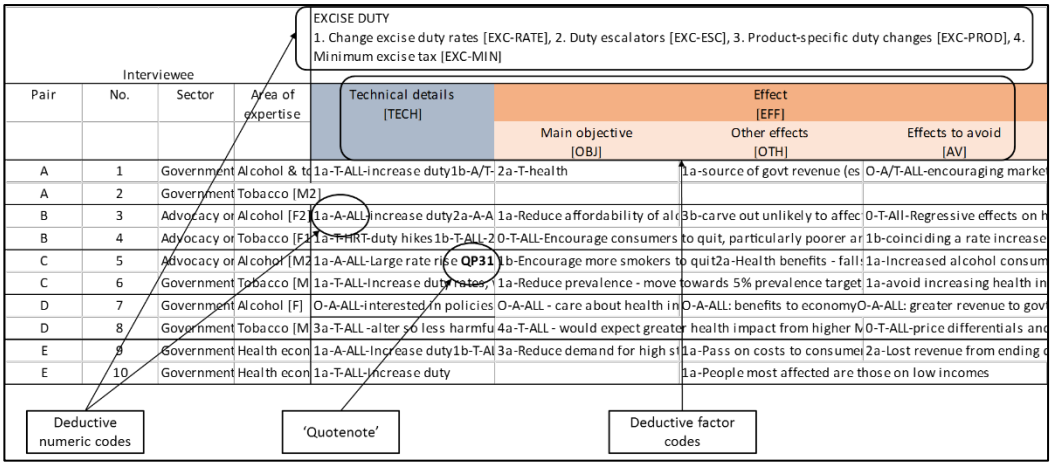

Figure 4. Example taken from Syntax framework analysis chart.

We tested our chart design by charting all the text in transcripts which had been coded as referring to participants' views of overarching objectives or jointness of alcohol and/or tobacco tax policy. Our systematic use of coding shorthand meant that at this stage we were able to use the CTRL-F function to efficiently find coded data. In each case, we read the code, recorded the summary text under the code in the chart and checked the meaning against the text in the transcript column.

Having populated this test sheet, we made three key changes. First, we realised we needed to be able to read chains of information across the tax options sheets. For example, we needed to know which technical tax change was predicted to have what effect but would be mediated by which factor. To address this, for each case (or participant) we numbered every technical tax option they proposed and

replicated this numbering across the columns in each sheet. These numbers were accompanied by indicators of product category and type – e.g. 1a-A-ALL (Figure 3). Second, we realised we needed a recording mechanism to help us begin to identify patterns in the data. To this end, at the bottom of each sheet we created some summary tables where we recorded the main points in each column and the participants who had raised them (Figure 4). Finally, we also recognised that we needed a mechanism for recording quotes. Where the transcript was particularly evocative or pertinent or effective in describing phenomena, we added a quote-note in the chart (e.g. QP35) and recorded the quote, its location in the transcript and its location in the chart in full in a separate word processing document (Figure 3).

TECH -RATE, ESC, PROD, MIN	Interviewee number(s)	EFFS -MAIN, OTH (themes subthemes)	Interviewee number(s)
Duty escalators		**Change affordability**	
Duty escalator + enforcement	B4	Reduce affordability	B3, E9
2% annual duty escalator above inflation	A1, B3, B4, C5, E9, D7	Increase price in real terms	B4
3% annual duty esclator above inflation	E9, D7	Increase price	C6
4% annual duty escalator above inflation	D7	**Population health**	
5% annual duty escalator above inflation	B3, B4, E9	Improve population health	A1, D7, D8
Freeze on escalator undesirable	A1	Reduce health inequalities	B4, D7
		Reduce harm	B3
		Reduce hospital admissions	C5, D7
		Reduce mortality	C5, D7
		Change health inequalities	E9, E10, D7

Figure 5. Extract from chart summary table showing participant distribution of comments on duty escalators and effects of excise duty policies.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is not to present an analysis of the data. We will do this elsewhere. We do however, wish to reflect on the effect of our deductive approach to framework analysis on our opportunity to analyse the data. Our first observation is about timeliness. The other components of the Syntax project were reliant on delivery of qualitative results by the end of the first year of the three-year project. Taking a highly-prescribed deductive approach enabled us to deliver on this commitment to our colleagues.

Second, the method provided an easy way of seeing potential trends in the data. By both looking across the cases at busy sections of the chart and reviewing the summary tables in each sheet, it was possible to gain early insights into overarching stories in the data. This enabled us to focus our attention on some key issues. At the same time, the presence of white space in the chart made it possible to identify silences in the data – one of these was ironically around consumer switching behaviour, something we purposefully added to the coding framework. These silences may point the way to future research.

Third, the deductive framework enabled us to elicit the complexity of the subject we investigated. The numbering system across our columns allowed us to understand each tax option in the round – ie. its technical detail, effect, consumer response, mediating factors and available evidence. From the chart we were also able to observe which tax options any given factor (e.g. effect, mediating factor, etc.) was associated with. From this perspective, the framework enabled us to extract an

understanding of underlying complexity which was not dissimilar to that developed by Tennant and Copestake who look across columns to extract "stories of change" (2019, this volume). The systematic charting component of the framework method thus presents researchers with an opportunity to draw and communicate the complexity more effectively. We hope to do this as part of our public and policy engagement work within the Syntax project.

Our other observations relate more specifically to the experience of qualitative research. Using a deductive approach undoubtedly brought an element of order to the "messiness" of qualitative analysis described in the call for papers for this symposium. At every stage we were able to rely on the 'advice' of tangible documents which lighted our way: this began with the project plan and rapid review protocol, and was developed further in the rapid review briefing and subsequent rapid review paper. This provided the structure for our coding and for our charting, kept us grounded in the research process and reduced the number of times we needed to revisit and revise our analytical framework. This is a key way in which a deductive framework analysis differs from an inductive one: inductive studies require additional stages of generating and indexing codes from the data (Gale et al. 2013). Researchers interested in deductive analytical approaches may also be interested in exploring template analysis (Brookes & King, 2014).

The decision to undertake a deductive qualitative research process also brought us head-to-head with what might be called a positive "myth" of qualitative research. That being the temptation to always think of qualitative research as being an inductive process, where codes are never established a priori (Fidel 1993). Other scholars from diverse disciplines have disputed this myth, arguing that both deduction and induction can form part of qualitative research studies (Atieno 2009, Anderson 2010). Hopefully, our experience of undertaking a purposively deductive study has shown that this approach has merits and that this myth does not really ring true. For Syntax, with its clear instrumental project objectives, the deductive framework approach was well-suited to our needs. As such, it played a critical part in the Syntax project's bid to develop and share the body of knowledge on alcohol and tobacco tax for the benefit of public and people's health. Further, having engaged with policy experts from government, regulatory and advocacy sectors using the evidence base and associated language they themselves were familiar with, the qualitative component of this research project has been important in building pathways for future engagement about the project's qualitative and quantitative findings.

A brief word about strengths and weaknesses. As always, the two intersect. On strengths, the prescriptive approach we employed across this qualitative research project enabled us to develop and apply evidence-based deductive codes in a timely way. In doing so, our research was tied closely to the existing literature and built constructively on existing knowledge. On weaknesses, we cannot use this example to draw direct comparisons with inductive studies. To do so, we would have needed to design a study which takes both approaches independently of each other. However, we can still point to the strengths of this approach as a valid and effective option where the research design and timeframe requires it.

CONCLUSION

It is unsurprising to us that health researchers have embraced the framework method in recent years (Gale et al. 2013). It is well-suited to the purposeful, structured, time-limited, interdisciplinary

research which is common in clinical, public health and health economics settings. However, it also has something to offer all disciplines where the project requires a structured approach. In the case of the Syntax project, our experience was that while the framework itself was deductively constructed, the process of construction and analysis still allowed sufficient air for us to breathe the emergent ideas about the feasibility of different alcohol and tobacco tax policy options and to understand how they interconnect. This less messy route has its place in a qualitative toolbox.

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Chapter Four

(Re)discovering Grounded Theory for Cross-Disciplinary Qualitative Health Research

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ABSTRACT

Grounded Theory analysis is a highly respected methodological approach to qualitative data. Though it has roots originating in Sociology, its use has been widespread, particularly in healthcare research and health-services evaluation. More recent times have seen healthcare researchers and health-service evaluators pay greater attention to qualitative research. In parallel to the increased popularity of qualitative research in these settings, has been the upsurge in cross-disciplinary collaborative initiatives. Guidance for cross-disciplinary working is, however, limited, if not entirely lacking from the literature. This lacuna is especially prevalent when attempting to identify instructions for the undertaking of sophisticated or complex analyses between researchers from varying disciplines. This chapter offers insight into how to apply Grounded Theory to qualitative health research studies and establishes a step-by-step approach to using this methodology appropriately in cross-disciplinary research settings, to achieve maximum rigour and satisfy the often-competing needs which arise when colleagues from different disciplines work together.

KEYWORDS

Cross-discipline collaboration; grounded theory; health research; inter-disciplinary working; methodology; qualitative analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, cross-disciplinary collaboration is becoming the norm in research practices. This is especially true of health and healthcare research, evaluation, education, and training (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Morse, 2010). In the United Kingdom, calls for cross-disciplinary working for health research have come from a governmental level (UK Government, 2018) and The Research Councils (UKRI, 2017; see also Rose, Carr, & Beresford, 2018; and UCL, 2018). Many areas of health research have embraced collaborations of mixed-professionals and argue the benefits in tackling serious global health issues (Marsili, 2016); narrowing knowledge-practice gaps (Urquhart, Grunfeld, Jackson, Sargeant, & Porter, 2013); and improving health-promotion (Tzenalis & Sotiriadou, 2010). However, cross-, inter-, multi-, or trans-disciplinary research have all become somewhat fashionable buzzwords in funding bids, grant applications, and subsequent research disseminations which has led to greater and more widespread scrutiny over how research remains credible and trustworthy, and also how methodological and analytical processes will continue to be rigorous when considering the competing demands of each discipline's theoretical standpoints and practical requirements (Goldberg, 2013; Mutz, Bornmann, & Daniel, 2015; United Nations, 2015). For qualitative researchers working in health and healthcare realms, this has meant researchers have had to address quality and rigour in more formalised ways than ever before (see Mays & Pope, 2000; Meyer, 2000; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000), which had historically usually been relegated to a sentence or two so long as the researchers demonstrated their sample was representative and their findings were in some way useful to clinical staff whilst being generalisable to other patient populations. This in itself is problematic in qualitative research, as the aim of qualitative work is never to be widely representative, nor generalisable, but rather to elucidate a novel finding amongst a specific population or phenomenon within a particular context. These findings may well then be applied to different settings, and 'tested' amongst new populations for similarities and differences.

Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is widely respected as a rigorous and commonly used method of analysis for qualitative data (Charmaz, 1995; Holton, 2008). Both qualitative data collection and, specifically, Grounded Theory analysis, are witnessing a renaissance adoption by researchers with increasingly wide usages within healthcare research and health-service evaluations (Chapman, Hadfield, & Chapman, 2015; Watling & Lingard, 2012). By bringing together a team comprised of an academic Psychologist, two Consultant Anaesthetists (who both work clinically), and a leading expert in Clinical Education (who is not clinically trained), we were able to adapt and develop a Grounded Theory approach which satisfies the often competing demands of both clinical and academic researchers. In this chapter, we present how the bringing together of this cross-disciplinary team enabled us to establish good working practices for rigorous, practical, cross-disciplinary qualitative research using a modified Grounded Theory approach. We blended the practicability requirements set-out by the clinical team, with the rigorous qualitative approaches and the theorisations made by the academic researchers, whilst staying true to the very epistemological and ontological stances required to undertake an inductive Grounded Theory. This resulted in an easily replicable, and rigorous modified approach to Grounded Theory appropriate for both cross-sectional and longitudinal cross-disciplinary qualitative health research, bringing an exciting new methodological approach into use for future multi-disciplinary health research teams undertaking qualitative analyses. What we set out below, (in a similar style to Braun & Clarke, 2006 for Thematic Analysis; or Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013 for Thematic Framework Analysis) is a step-by-step guide on how cross-disciplinary teams of researchers can achieve this methodological approach whilst maintaining rigour and quality of data throughout, from study design to analysis and beyond.

QUALITATIVE DATA HANDLING: "TAMING THE MESSINESS"

Data – qualitative, in particular – can be especially messy and require a substantial amount of processing before it can be worked-up through analysis. The way in which the data will need to be prepared as well as the extent to which the data must be cleaned will largely rely on the origin of the data, and what type of qualitative data has been gathered or collected. Though there is the potential for this process to be time consuming, it is usually worth allowing a substantial proportion of the time allocated for the research project to be dedicated to these data handling processes, because the more accurate your data are of the raw recording or source, the more accurate your analysis will be, as well as your reported findings, and researcher confidence in your representation of participants' responses.

Designing a Qualitative Grounded Theory Study

Qualitative data can take many forms. On one side, there are now huge repositories of free-text, which is largely ungoverned or uncensored, but freely accessible such as internet-based, public data taken from social media platforms, blogs, or participatory forums. On the other side, we see more formalised historical written records or archival data which may be devoid of context, especially if written some time before one comes to analyse it. Perhaps more familiar to social science and health researchers are qualitative datasets derived from open-ended survey questions, focus groups, or interviews (Silverman, 1993). Most healthcare research and health-services evaluation will rely on primary sources of data, meaning data will usually be collected from those involved in the care pathway or service as an ongoing *('research')* or final *('evaluation')* part of the study or project. Departing from traditional Glaserian Grounded Theory dictum (Glaser, 2007, p.1), we do not suggest "all is data" (see also Holton & Walsh, 2017), and move to (re)discover Grounded Theory as a rigorous, useful, and valuable *qualitative* methodological tool for researchers collecting data through transcribed interviews or focus groups, textual matter, field notes, or data taking another written format. Within this chapter we will focus on interview data, but the processes explained (see *Table 1*) can be easily extrapolated to other datasets gathered from a variety of sources and using an assortment of data collection methods. We do agree with Glaser (1992) however, that data should be collected with no *a priori* assumptions about the topic of interest or the population and without consultation of the published literature in order for researcher bias to not interfere with the empirical and inductive nature of the Grounded Theory process. Researchers may find working with a cross-disciplinary team makes this easier as there are a multitude of competing interests amongst the team meaning it is difficult to prejudice the data analysis especially if data collection is being done by members of more than one profession (Cheek, 2008; Fernald & Duclos, 2005; MacCleave, 2006; Sin, 2008). Moreover, it is important to remember when designing a Grounded Theory study that the questions should be broad and experientially focused, asking about people's experiences of something rather than closed or leading questions about specifics. These can also be followed-up by a list of possible prompts which the interviewer can use to tease out information from the participant if they have not quite addressed the topic area fully enough, and likewise offers the researcher the flexibility to follow-up on interesting points made by the participant without being tied to a prescriptive list of questions. Mock interviews within and outside of the research team (i.e. with Patient/Participant and Public Involvement [PPI] group) is good practice and rehearsal should take place as many times as is required for all members who will be interviewing to become comfortable with the schedule, as well as revising it according to any feedback received. Having multiple interviewers is, sometimes in itself problematic, as consistency amongst interviewers may vary widely. This is especially true if working

in a cross-disciplinary group where some interviewers may favour certain parts of the interview schedule which are more aligned to their professional background (Sin, 2008). Likewise some interviewers may be more or less comfortable to probe participants further on shorter answers given. Some variability is perfectly acceptable, but repeated training amongst the team before doing participant interviews is key in mitigating this issue.

Preparing Data

As with every study involving qualitative data, the first step is to prepare it, ready for analysis. For interview studies and others which require data collection through audio recordings, transcription is the usual necessary first step, whereby audio is turned into written accounts of the interview. There are three ways in which you can transcribe qualitative data and it is for research teams to decide which would best suit their needs for each new study they undertake. Firstly, there is *Verbatim ('Strict') Transcription,* where everything which is captured on the audio record is transcribed including contextual matter such as false sentence starts; filler-words, or those which are emphasised or repeated; grammatically incorrect phrases, and those spoken in a different way (including foreign words and the demarcation of whispers, mumbles, raised- or acted-voices e.g. falsetto), whilst also noting coughing, laughing, crying etc., as well as any interruptions to the interview. This method of transcription gives a rich, almost visual context to whoever reads the transcript allowing the reader to understand the setting, and the emotionality and/or certainty with which the participant spoke. The next version is *Intelligent ('Standard') Transcription,* which is similar to verbatim transcription, but lacking any of the contextual matter (whilst also translating any foreign words without leaving the original in place and replacing incorrect uses of language with true wording). This allows for an easier-to-read transcript and is generally accepted as the most common method of transcription for informational or evaluative studies which are not necessarily concerned with any psycho-emotional responses to the interview questions or topics being discussed. Finally, there is *Selective ('Edited') Transcription,* which can take a few different forms, but always translates foreign words, corrects neologisms or incorrectly used and portmanteau words, whilst omitting all contextual matter. In doing this the transcriber, corrects grammatically incorrect speech often in short summaries of what was said, rather than actual speech used. In this method of transcription, researchers may also choose to only transcribe some of the interview data and not the full interview, meaning the end transcript is a condensed summary of the actual interview.

Table 1. The Grounded Theory Process

Study Phase	Data Handling Stage	Definition of the Process
Study Design and Development	Designing Interview Schedule ‡	Note areas of interest, with a few broad questions and several potential prompts to aid conversation.
	Piloting Interview Schedule ‡	It is good practice to do a mock interview inside the research team, with other researchers not attached to the project, and with a member of your PPI team.
Preparing Data	Data Collection †	Use interview schedule to interview consenting participants/patients and audio record it. Occasionally you may need to revise the interview schedule if they provide feedback.
	Transcription †/‡	Sending your audio recordings to professional transcribers or transcribing the audio amongst the research team, being mindful of which type of transcription is required.
Cleaning Data	Checking Transcripts †	Listen to original audio whilst reading transcript. This is essential for ensuring the transcription has been correctly undertaken. Amend any mis-transcribed, omitted, or falsely entered words. If needed, add contextual matter.
	(Re-)Familiarisation †	All research team members should read all transcripts to either re-familiarize or familiarize themselves with the interviews.
	Printing or Uploading Transcripts †/‡	If you are hand-coding, print transcripts with a wide margin on each side to facilitate the coding processes. Most health and social science researchers use NVivo if using QDA software.
Coding	Open ('Line-by-Line') Coding †	The first coding (also known as open; line-by-line; or lower order coding) requires the analyst(s) to go through each transcript and summarise each line of participant text with a word or phrase derived from the words the participant has used.
	Focused ('Axial') Coding †	The second coding (also known as focused; axial; or higher order coding) requires the analyst(s) to go through each transcript again, but this time grouping some of the open codes to reduce the total number of codes, which then represent parts of the text rather than just individual lines.
Theme Development	Development of Super-Categories ('Sub-Themes') †	Each super-category will be made up of the merging together or splitting apart and rearranging of focused codes. It may be useful to draw an initial thematic diagram of these super-categories and how they may relate to each other.
	Creating Themes ‡	When lower-order sub-themes have been established and ratified, it is then possible to generate themes, by collapsing super-categories together.
Theory Generation	Theoretical Sampling ‡	Recruiting more participants of a particular demographic/characteristic to explore the potential of weakly supported themes being further supported or removed entirely from the final theory.
	Consulting with Field ('Memo') Notes †	The beginning of theory generation is a sensible time to consult these to answer any questions or queries researchers have had during the whole project.
	Generating Theory ‡	Theory is generated by looking at relationships between themes. At this stage, sketch out a thematic diagram using arrows to help explain the relational nature of one theme to another.
Defence of Theory	Within Team Defence ‡	Researchers must defend their analysis amongst the rest of their team members with a view to eventually agree on the final theory going forward.
	Interpreting Theory ‡	Researchers must interpret the theory meaning by explaining the relationships between themes and establishing a coherent narrative to accompany your theory's thematic diagram.
	Framing Theory ‡	Theories require each theme's relationship with one another to be established. The theory must be framed amongst existing literature to ensure it is coherent.
Writing-Up	Analysis Section Using Quotations ‡	Analysis should be written with the emphasis on the participant data with limited, but clear supporting interpretive narrative.
	Discussion and Conclusion ‡	This is the final opportunity to 'sell' the theory to the reader by placing it at the heart of the discussion and demonstrating its rigour, empiricism, reliability, and validity.
Testing the Theory	Test Theory in a Different Population †/‡	The theory can now be tested in different populations to see whether it 'holds true' in new settings. New evidence may cause the theory to be revised and/or adapted.

N/B. † Indicates analysts should work independently before cross-checking with other group members.
‡ Indicates analysts should work on this whole stage as a collaborative group.

Cleaning Data

Qualitative data may require some level of 'cleaning' before it is ready to be analysed. This is often dependent on how data has been transcribed, and especially so if the audio recordings have been sent to an external agency for professional transcription. This process will require a member of the research team to read through the transcript whilst listening to the original audio and checking that the written record is an accurate reflection of the audio recording. Whilst doing this, it also provides the

opportunity for researchers to *re*-familiarize themselves with the interview, or in cases where other members of the research team are checking transcripts of interviews that they themselves did not conduct, it offers the chance for these researchers to become familiar with the content of the interview. It is at this point that researchers can add some of the contextual matter into the transcripts if transcribers have only offered an intelligent transcription service. Furthermore, this (re)familiarisation process provides an opportunity for the research team to discuss the content of transcripts and raise initial thoughts pertaining to the study or forthcoming analysis. When this is complete the analysts will be required to either upload the transcripts to a qualitative data analysis [QDA] computer software such as NVivo (current version: 12.1; QSR International, 2018), or print each transcript off with wide margins in order to allow for a manual analytical work-up of the data. Printing one-sided provides the back of each page to make *Field ('Memo') Notes* on as you are coding. This is purely down to research group preference and the practicalities of analysis amongst the team (for example, some members of the team may not have access to the software; see also Sin, 2008). However, for those researchers who are unfamiliar with qualitative data analysis or Grounded Theory, it is the recommendation of the authors of this chapter that a manual coding and analysis is conducted. This encourages further familiarity with the data by the analysts and allows for a more inductive and generative process as this method starts with coding every line of data, rather than beginning with a higher-order coding process, which is with what QDA software forces analysts to commence (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Lee & Esterhuizen, 2000; St. John & Johnson, 2000).

GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS IN HEALTH RESEARCH: "THE METHOD"

In more recent healthcare research and health-service evaluations, there has been an increased reliance on qualitative data collection and analysis, for novel enquiries into existing or newly occurring issues in health and healthcare settings which are often disseminated as reports to inform policy and practice (see Chapman, Hadfield, & Chapman, 2015; Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Huckel Schneider & Blyth, 2017; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Other studies have captured and recorded the experiences and perceptions of: Service provision (e.g. Bélanger & Rodríguez, 2008; Tzenalis & Sotiriadou, 2010; Urquhart, Grunfeld, Jackson, Sargeant, & Porter, 2013; Ward, House, & Hamer, 2009); continued professional development, education initiatives, and on-the-job training for health and healthcare professionals (e.g. Alonge, Frattaroli, Davey-Rothwell, & Baral, 2016; Watling & Lingard, 2012; Watson et al., 2012); as well as documenting illness narratives of patients and the views of the staff who treat them (e.g. Schwappach & Gehring, 2014; Wilkinson & Dare, 2014). Grounded Theory as a qualitative methodology has been efficaciously used in much modern-day healthcare research (e.g. Rees, Chilcot, Donnellan, & Soulsby, 2018) and health-service evaluations (see Baldwin, Mills, Birks, & Budden, 2017; Ellegaard, Bliksted, Mehlsen, & Lomborg,

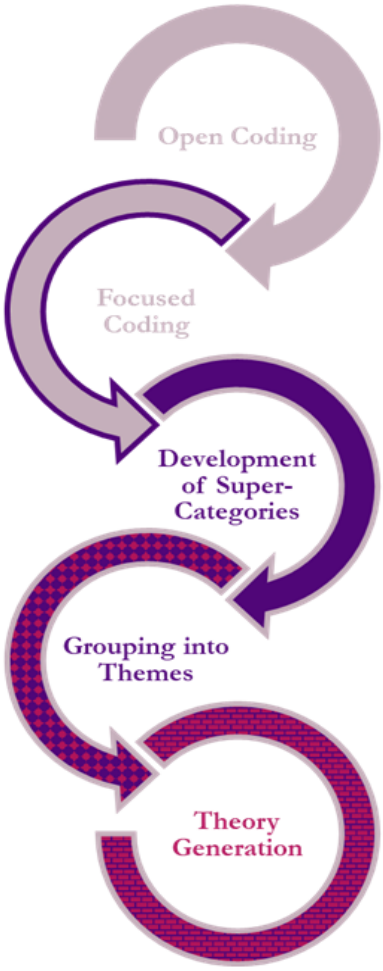

Figure 1. Phases of Coding, Theme Development, and Theory Generation in Grounded Theory.

2018; Harding, Brown, Hayward, & Pettinari, 2010; Schreiber & MacDonald, 2010; Wroblewska-O'Sullivan, Coughlan, & Ryan, 2014). Grounded Theory analysis has a reasonably prescriptive methodological approach to which researchers should adhere (see *Figure 1*). In the following section, we describe the methodology which we implore cross-disciplinary healthcare researchers and health-service evaluators to follow should they wish to undertake a Grounded Theory investigation of their phenomenon, situation, or practices.

Coding

Grounded Theory is a highly methodical methodology which relies on a researcher's ability to work with the data over a substantial amount of time to generate a theory of the population and phenomenon of interest. The coding phase has two stages (see *Figure 2* for example transcript). Firstly, there is: *Open ('Line-by-Line') Coding,* which is a lower-order coding of the data. This requires the analyst to read each transcript in full and summarise each line of the participant data with a word from the line which best summarises the line of text, on – we would advise – the left-hand margin of the transcripts and using a single colour (if hand-coding). The idea behind this is that you are reducing the data down from whole lines (or phrases/partial sentences) to single words which are easier to manage and allows the analyst or their colleagues to immediately spot any patterns or recurring terms which appear in particular transcripts when comparing them across the dataset. This stage is often omitted when using QDA software as this would create too many codes on the software and would render the codebook unworkable (Gilbert, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Humble, 2012; Richards, 1998). For novice qualitative researchers, we would recommend lower-order coding as an essential part of the analytical process. This process is followed by a higher-order coding of the data called: *Focused ('Axial') Coding.* This involves going back over the transcripts to group some of the open codes together in more encompassing codes, for example, there may be several words used to describe the same phenomenon (i.e. nervous, worried, panic which could all be synonymous with *'anxiety'*; or birth, labour, delivery, parturition which could all be labelled under *'birth'*). These umbrella codes can now be used as labels for larger parts of the transcript data, such as full sentences or whole paragraphs, resulting in less frequent and fewer overall codes being noted (this time on the right-hand margin, and in a different colour, if hand-coding). This will often be the first code if a researcher is using QDA software.

Research project (brief title): (Re)discovering Grounded Theory
Participant: GT1967
Interview Date: 30th January 2019
Interviewer: Q.L. Researcher

Open ('Line-by-Line') Coding	**I: Could you tell me about how you first discovered Grounded Theory?**	*Focused ('Axial') Coding*
Long [time] *Methodology* *Supervisors* *Trained up* *Other qualitative methodologies* *[different] studies* *Analysis* *Comfortable* *Generate theory* *Generating theory* *Test [theory]* *Came to use [it]* *it stuck*	P: Errm… It's been so long, but… Grounded Theory was the methodology which my supervisors used when I was doing my degree, and so they trained me up. I tried a couple of other qualitative methodologies in different studies I have used, but I just couldn't get used to them or achieve the analysis what I wanted. I guess Grounded Theory is just comfortable for me… but if you are trying to generate theory… I mean generating theory - that's what it's all about isn't it… so you can head off and test it elsewhere. So yeah, that's how I came to use it, I was taught it and it kinda stuck I suppose!	*Training* *Comfortable* *Generating Theory*

Memo Writing from Interview:

- Participant emphasises theory generation as major use.
- Idea of legacy planning/training next generation of researchers, as if Grounded Theory is passed on from supervisor to student to their students and so on.
- Does participant use any other qualitative methodologies?

Figure 2. Example Coded Transcript.

Theme Development

Once coding has been completed and agreed amongst the team, the next phase of Grounded Theory is to begin developing themes. The higher-order codes should be recorded (usually in a code book, spreadsheet, electronic document, or even just on a large piece of paper), so that they can be grouped to create *Super-Categories ('Sub-Themes')*. Through a process of merging together or splitting apart and rearranging of higher-order codes, researchers should aim to dramatically reduce the number of different concepts generated from the data. To do this, researchers should group all the similar focused codes together under appropriate super-category/sub-theme headings. It may be helpful at this stage to draw out these super-categories as a *Thematic Diagram* to visually represent the preliminary sub-themes which have been derived from the dataset (see *Figure 3*). Lower-order themes (super-categories/sub-themes) can then be sorted and grouped into higher-order *Themes* which are achieved by using researcher judgement to collapse super-categories together and refine theme names. These themes act as the building blocks of the theory. At this stage they have to be established (i.e. named and coherent with sufficient data saturation/quotations to support each theme), but are not required to be cohesive or relative to one another, though researchers and analysts may wish to annotate their initial thoughts on possible relationships to aid discussion when it comes to generating the theory with the rest of the team (see *Figure 3*).

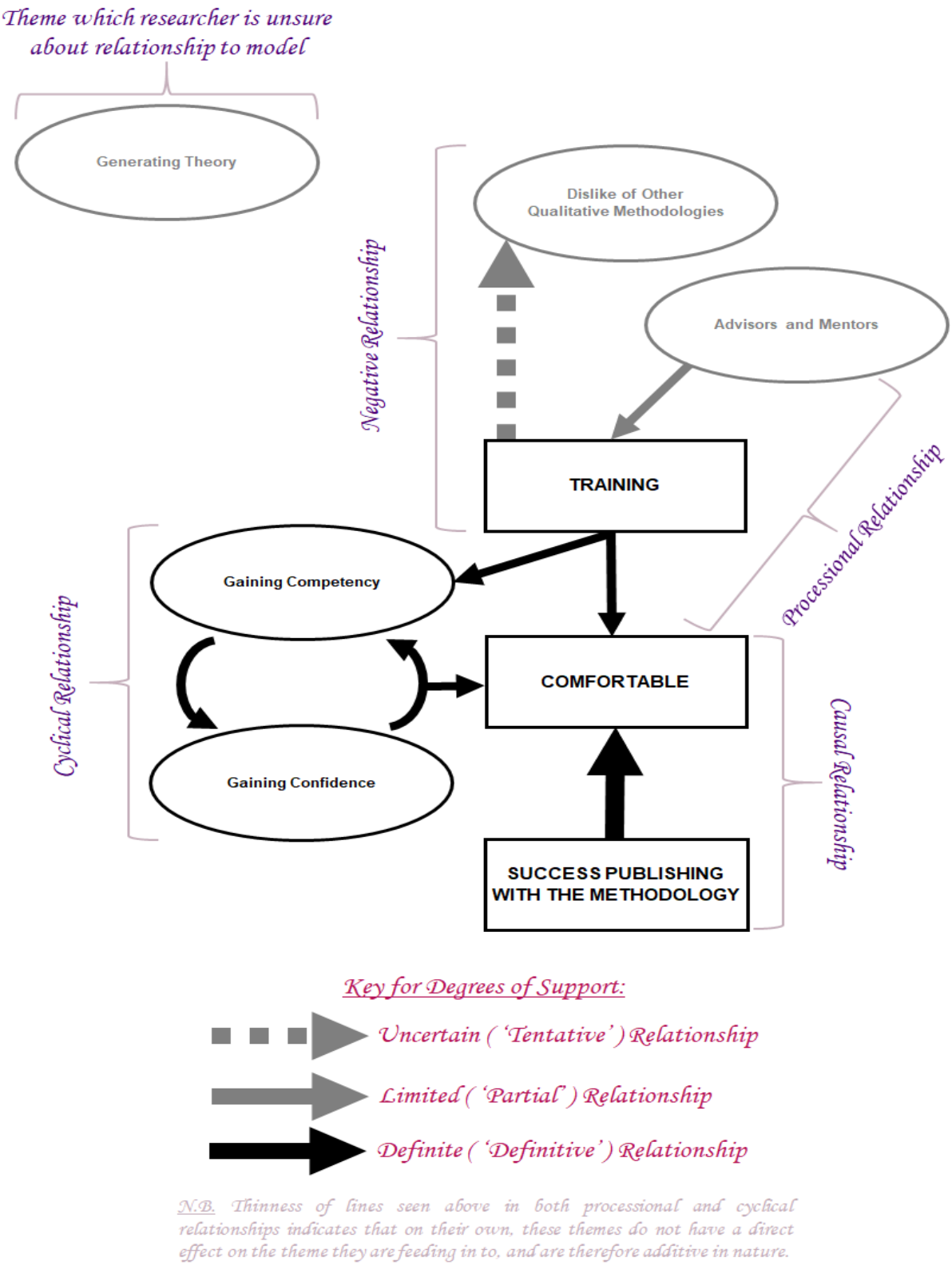

Figure 3. Example Annotated Thematic Diagram of Super-Categories.
(N.B. Explanatory annotations for purpose of chapter instruction only)

Theory Generation

If there is a theme which has been generated with little support, or if it has been derived from only a select few from your study population, it is possible to sample more participants who match the demographic characteristics of those individuals whose data contributes to this theme in a process called *Theoretical Sampling*. In these cases, themes may either be supported if more data contributes to the theme or discarded if the theoretical sampling proves fruitless. In Grounded Theory projects it is important to make *Field ('Memo') Notes* throughout the study, to keep a record of any thoughts or questions which arise from the researcher at all stages of the study development, data collection phase, and analysis (see Montgomery & Bailey, 2007). Consulting these at the theme generation phase ensures the research team has not missed any important information, whilst offering the opportunity for any unanswered questions to be discussed amongst the team, and in doing so will help to contextualise themes. Once all members of the team are content there is no more exploratory analysis to be done, you can now develop the overall theory of your analysis. To do this, researchers must provide details of how each theme relates to the others. Relationships between themes may be *processional* (i.e. one theme leads on to another), *causal* (i.e. one theme is created because of the presence of another), *reverse* (i.e. one theme mitigates the effects of another), or *cyclical* (i.e. one theme facilitates another, which in turn facilitates the first). Relationships may also have varying degrees of support from a *definite ('definitive') relationship* (i.e. where the relationship is firmly established), to a *limited ('partial') relationship* (i.e. one which is weakly established), and finally to an *uncertain ('tentative') relationship* (i.e. one which has yet to be fully established or is true only some of the time or in certain circumstances). The way in which the themes inter-relate, and either cause, are affected by, or co-occur is the crux of the Theory, which can be supported with quotations. At this stage, the research team should produce the second thematic diagram of the theory which includes the final higher-order themes, and all the relationship lines/arrows included (see *Figure 4*).

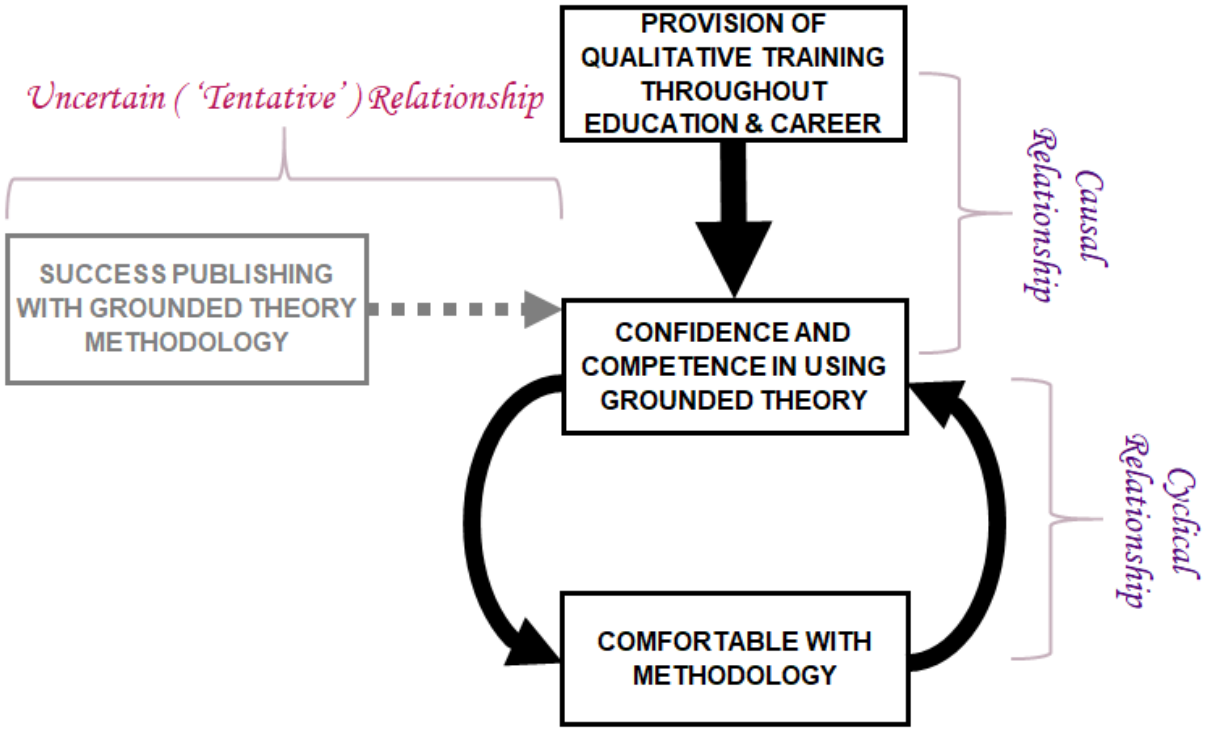

Figure 4. Example Thematic Diagram of Themes: The Final Theory.

(N.B. Explanatory annotations for purpose of chapter instruction only)

Defending Your Theory

The first defence of your theory should be amongst your research team. It is perfectly legitimate to disagree with your colleagues and collaborators, and in some cases might even be welcomed as arriving at your final theory and analysis should not be straightforward or easy – if it is, the likelihood is that you have either not interrogated the data well enough, or the analyses put forward by your fellow analysts, or both. The bringing together of analyses from all the analysts in the team should act as the final and most thorough barometer in considering whether you have adequately assessed the data. Disagreement may ensue for long periods of time, but with good argumentation and justification, the team should eventually arrive at a strong analysis and final theory. This will happen after having accepted where concessions must be made, highlighting particular aspects of the theory, and perhaps even augmenting the themes or their relationships to one another to ensure you are left with the theory which is best reflection of the data you collected. After the defence amongst the research team, the remainder of this phase of Grounded Theory is split into two stages: *Interpreting Theory* and *Framing Theory*. The first of these stages requires the researcher(s) to apply meaningful interpretation to the theory they have developed, and subsequently producing a coherent, logical, and representative narrative to accompany the thematic diagram of the theory. This narrative will form the basis of your *analysis section* when writing up. The second stage entails researcher(s) turning to published literature to see where their Grounded Theory fits with previously existing theories and findings. This stage will help to compare the research team's theory to established ones and will enable the team to highlight any similarities and more importantly, any differences, which will form the basis of the *discussion section* of any subsequent reports, papers, or conference outings where the data are presented.

Writing-Up

Grounded Theory is an iterative analytical process which continues into the write-up phase. Analysis sections should be derived from the interpretation of theory stage when researcher(s) are defending their theory. All Grounded Theory is 'data heavy', meaning analysis sections should allow the data to depict the narrative of the theory more than the researcher's explanations. This is a more Glaserian style of write-up, and the style which we would encourage all researchers using Grounded Theory to use. The supporting narrative should allow readers to be guided seamlessly from quotation to quotation and theme to theme, but should not dominate and therefore researchers' interpretations of quotations should be limited in this data-driven write-up style. In a sense, author(s) should act as conductors to the orchestra of participant quotations. As in most collaborative projects, there will be one member of the team who takes responsibility for leading the write-up. It is the role of this lead author to ensure the narrative flows not only throughout the analysis, but that the narrative has a clear beginning when the study is introduced, and is then continued throughout the text to the end of the manuscript until a neat conclusion is reached. Co-authors will be key to contributing most of the start and end matter of the paper and will be crucial to the proof-reading and revising processes, however it is the lead author who should have overall control of the paper's message, and who should be responsible for leading the analysis and discussion sections. The final part of the study write-up is the discussion (derived from the theory framing stage) and the conclusion. Here the opportunity arises to draw on existing literature and – in an albeit more Straussian approach to Grounded Theory – subsequently frame the theory which has been generated as part of the study firmly at the centre. Researchers must make the case for how rigorous their approach has been, how empirically data has been gathered, and how relevant, valid and reliable their theory is. The trick is to be convincing and that will only happen if the theory has been truely grounded in the participant data.

Testing the Theory

The reason for using Grounded Theory is to enable an iterative and inductive working-up of data over an extended period, which enables a data-driven theory to be actively generated by the researchers using data extracted from interviewed participants. The theory becomes a workable entity which can be tested in different populations to see whether it is relevant, reliable, and valid in new populations. In light of new data and evidence, an existing theory may be subject to revisions, adapted, or updated to reflect cultural shift, modern perspectives, or newly acquired data which departs from the original theory.

APPLYING THE METHOD: "RULES AND MYTHS OF GROUNDED THEORY"

Because of its revered status as a qualitative methodology to which researchers aspire, many myths and misconceptions have circulated about the Grounded Theory processes. Through this step-by-step guide for cross-disciplinary qualitative health researchers, we have hoped to simplify the processes, as so to allow the methodology to be both accessible and approachable, whilst demonstrating its use and utility in cross-disciplinary projects. In the following section, we outline some more theoretical aspects of Grounded Theory as well as some best practice for researchers to follow.

Ontology and Epistemology

The methodology presented above has been developed as a hybridised, but heavily *Classical* Grounded Theory approach adapted for cross-disciplinary qualitative health research. It remains faithful to the core principles set out in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) Grounded Theory and Glaser's subsequent advancements (Glaser, 1992) by relying on a constant comparative method of data collection and analysis, theoretical sampling, and an iterative, inductive, and data-driven approach. However, this approach also draws on Strauss (1987) to allow the theory to be framed amongst existing literature towards the end of the process. Nevertheless, we fervently dismiss the notion that primary data is a co-constructed and fabricated interpretation of reality between interviewer and interviewee as – the Straussian – Charmaz (1995) would suggest (see also Howard-Payne, 2016). We propose that data collected through interviews with participants, whilst might not necessarily be *true,* are in fact the lived reality or *'truths'* for the participant who recounts them. In this respect we would suggest researchers undertaking Grounded Theory are best to adopt the following ontological position and epistemological approach (see also Silverio, 2018 for more detailed discussion). A *Critical Realist Ontology* encourages researchers to deal with the reality of participants' experiences and what can be understood about said reality, using solely the information from the data collected to answer those questions by developing a Grounded Theory. A *Realist Epistemology* allows for researchers to adopt a stance based on objectivist principles (or postpositivist emergence; see Levers, 2013), where attempts can be made to approach the participants and their data with no preconceived notions of what the characteristics of the participants or data are.

Study Development and Constant Comparison

Most Grounded Theory studies are carried out with discreet and prescribed populations to discover their perspective or experience of a particular phenomenon, and therefore are generally *Cross-Sectional* in nature. The methodology documented above is certainly applicable to cross-sectional studies, but may also be applied to *Longitudinal* studies. *Constant Comparison* is a fundamental aspect of Grounded Theory and along with no *a priori* assumptions, makes up the fabric of the classical Grounded Theory identity. Whereas with cross-sectional studies, the data is compared from

participant to participant, i.e. the transcript of the second participant is compared to that of the first, and the transcript of the third participant is compared to those of the second and the first participants, and so on; there are in fact two ways in which longitudinal data can be analysed. The first option is a *Timepoint-by-Timepoint Analysis,* whereby researchers analyse all the Time 1 data for each participant, then the Time 2 data, followed by all the Time 3 data and so on until the last set of data analysed is that of the last data collection timepoint. The second option is a *Participant-by-Participant Analysis,* where researchers analyse each participant's complete set of data (i.e. timepoint 1 to timepoint *n*) and then move onto the next participant's full dataset, and so on, thereby constantly comparing between timepoints (i.e. *within* participant datasets) and between participants (*between* participant datasets). There are benefits and drawbacks to both options. Participant-by-participant analysis may appear to be the complete antithesis of Grounded Theory due to researchers not being able to start analysis until all data is collected across all timepoints for the first participant, but it enables a within and between participant comparison, and has the major benefit of having collected the complete narrative to analyse for each participant, rather than the more piecemeal timepoint-by-timepoint analysis. Timepoint-by-timepoint analysis, whilst remaining faithful to the immediacy and constancy of analysis in Grounded Theory, dictates that researchers simply will not have the 'full analytical picture' of the data when analysis commences. It is not the object of this chapter to state which is correct or incorrect, as different research teams may have different requirements, and some projects will lend themselves better to one analysis than the other. For example, if you had a longitudinal study of three timepoints spaced five years apart, a participant-by-participant analysis would force researcher(s) to wait a minimum of fifteen years before commencing analysis, rendering the study potentially unfeasible. Likewise, some studies may require a full narrative in order for the data to be coherent (for example, if you are analysing data on training competencies). In this scenario, a timepoint-by-timepoint analysis would mean researchers did not have the full picture when analysis began, and one would have to question the usefulness of this type of analysis. Researchers should, therefore, exercise caution when doing longitudinal analyses using Grounded Theory and ensure they have selected the correct approach for their study during the study design and development phase.

Theme Saturation and Inter-Rater Reliability

As with all qualitative data, there is no expectation in Grounded Theory studies that you must recruit numerous participants to have "enough" data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Morse, 2000). Due to its rigorous and iterative nature, it is not uncommon for (cross-disciplinary health research) Grounded Theory studies to be conducted and completed with relatively few participants (e.g. Rees, Chilcot, Donnellan, & Soulsby, 2018; see also Silverio, 2018). However, recent movements in qualitative research circles have called for a greater emphasis to be placed on researcher judgement of *Theme Saturation ('Thematic Concordance')* being reached, over number of participants recruited (see Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018 for a systematic review on the topic). Theme saturation is achieved when new data from subsequent participants no longer produces any new concepts (e.g. codes, super-categories, or themes) when being analysed, meaning all possible perceptions and explanations of the phenomenon being investigated in the population of choice have been exhausted. A good way of checking theme saturation has been achieved is to be consultative amongst the research team after each of the nine study phases set out above. This may be more familiarly known as *Inter-Rater Reliability* to non-qualitative researchers (see Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997; Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013), but differs in as much as you are not looking for direct and complete matches of themes, but rather the analysis is an ongoing process of consultation and negotiation. Consultative analysis should be done via face-to-face meetings,

where possible, but conversation should be kept open via telephone calls and e-mail dialogue for immediate consultation in between each of the twenty study stages (see *Table 1*). A good rule of thumb, is that where there is more than one analyst, the first analyst should analyse all the transcripts and the second should analyse half – if cross-checking finds inter-rater reliability and thematic concordance to be high or excellent there is no need for the second analyst to analyse any more, though if this is not the case, they should analyse more transcripts. If there is a third analyst, then the first analyses all and the second and third analyse half each. Where there is a fourth analyst, we recommend the first analyst analyses all transcripts, whilst the second and third analysts take half each, and the fourth analyses half of those analysed by the second analyst and half of those analysed by the third analyst. Again, more analysts may help reduce researcher bias, and will assist in satisfying the sometimes competing needs of those researchers from different professional backgrounds. However, we would strongly recommend against more than four analysts for a small-to-medium-scale Grounded Theory study in order to avoid *Interpretive Pluralism:* The propagation of distinct codes, super-categories, themes, or theories due to volume of analysts rather than variation within the dataset. Often, discussions about analysis will aid all researchers in realising they are calling aspects of the data by different labels, but actually mean the same underlying concept as another researcher, and therefore inter-rater reliability and thematic saturation is being reached, but the realisation that it has lags behind the process.

(Good) Cross-Disciplinary Working

Working *on* or *across* the boundaries of different disciplines is not an easy feat. It is often difficult to begin with as different disciplines have different jargons and ways of implementing research (Boucher, Smyth, & Johnstone, 2004; Huang et al., 2018; Milford et al., 2017; Olesen, Droes, Hatton, Chico, & Schatzman, 1994). It requires all members of the team to widen their perspectives by acknowledging the expertise of others whilst simultaneously defending their own (Bowers, 2010; Kuzel, 2010; Mayan, 2010), but we argue – as others have done before us (e.g. Cheek, 2008; Fernald & Duclos, 2005) – the benefits have the potential to outweigh the initial struggles each and every time. It is the belief of the authors, after having collaborated on Grounded Theory projects, that to be truely cross-disciplinary, there must be an emphasis on collaboration rather than ownership between partners; an appreciation of the needs of each discipline, be they professional, educational, or research-orientated; all aided by an open and honest line of communication between all parties involved. We also recommend researchers should develop an ability to be clear about explanations and be prepared to interpret them in non-discipline-specific jargon. Likewise, all researchers in the team must have an openness to speak-up when they disagree with interpretations of findings and challenge where necessary; whilst demonstrating a real willingness to negotiate interpretations of findings, standing firm on some points, and conceding or deferring on others (MacCleave, 2006; Richards, 1999). Discussions around data will expectedly be lensed by professional backgrounds, and initial generation of super-categories and themes is expected to be slow, taking much conversation, compromise, debate, and negotiation. It will not be uncommon for the differing demands of each of the professions from which the researchers will analyse to often compete with or be missed by the other professions.

CONCLUSION

The recent uptake in qualitative methodologies to understand patient- and population-level experiences is a promising shift in the research practices amongst healthcare researchers and health-

service evaluators. Though occasionally still met with concern, qualitative research has at least gained appreciation for its quality, and at best garnered respect for its insight (see Burman, 1998; Pope, van Royen, & Baker, 2002). This chapter has been written as a step-by-step guide for all researchers of health and healthcare services wishing to work in a cross-disciplinary team and achieve quality findings derived from well-collected data and rigorous Grounded Theory analysis. That is not to say however, that the 'nine phases, twenty stages' approach set out above cannot be used outside of health research, and therefore within any discipline wishing to employ a Grounded Theory methodology (for example psychological, sociological, and anthropological studies; business and management evaluations; studies in human geography; projects which are ethnographic in nature, or even Grounded Theory studies of film, television, and stage scripts, or of operettas and music lyrics). What we have hoped to also demonstrate is how exactly qualitative research generally, but Grounded Theory especially, can be valuable. We have further demonstrated the scope of its utility in producing both results and testable theories within healthcare settings, which can help propagate future research and further our understanding of particular phenomena across different populations. So often, training or guidance in qualitative methods and methodologies is seen as unimportant, which has frequently led to researchers having to 'learn qualitative methods minus mentorship' (to borrow from McCallin, Nathaniel, & Andrews, 2011). This has, unfortunately, habitually led to poorly executed qualitative research being presented, which consequently contributes to the lack of prestige qualitative research has held leading to the abandonment, ignorance, or neglect of qualitative results. In documenting the processes required to achieve (good) cross-disciplinary Grounded Theory we hope to provide a guide which is accessible and useable for future research. As others have (see Massey et al., 2006), we argue the case of working *at* and *across* the boundaries of different disciplines to provide a more holistic approach to study design, data collection, and analysis; and to inevitably achieve a wider reach when disseminating research findings. Above all, we have aimed for this chapter to enable researchers – novice *and* experienced – to (re)discover Grounded Theory as a methodology to consider for future cross-disciplinary health research projects.

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Chapter Five

Rethinking Rigour: Analytic dilemmas of a scientist morphing into a social scientist

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ABSTRACT

In transitioning from scientist to social scientist - and from teacher to teacher-researcher - and with the lived experiences of marginalised students as my inspiration, I confronted thought-provoking issues. Whilst I was drawn to an ethnographic approach, settling on a suitable analytic stance, was messier. I was determined to keep students voices to the fore and have sufficient rigour, reliability and reproducibility. I discuss the rationale for my eventual choice of qualitative analytic approach - drawn from grounded theory techniques - detailing the specific analytic steps, incorporating free writing, initial coding, clustering, memoing, focused coding and diagramming. I make the process transparent and open to critique - providing detail often glossed over. Through the replication of a complete memo, within which I detail how I utilise deeply embedded web-like diagramming even at the early stages of analysis, I illustrate how tentative social processes are recognised. I find this more detailed, augmented process to be suitably rigorous. This augmented process, with early use of deeply embedded diagramming, offers an analytic technique for other researchers also.

KEYWORDS

Diagramming; qualitative analysis; grounded theory techniques; rigour; reproducibility.

THE BACKDROP: MARGINALISED STUDENTS AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The lived experience of marginalised students was the driving force behind this research. Marginalised students are themselves in a unique position to shed light on the possible sources of marginalisation, and their stories can enable a better understanding of triggers, causes, effects and consequences of their disengagement from mainstream secondary education. These insights can then hopefully point to some effective interventions. In order to keep students firmly at the heart of this work, and to better enable their voice to be heard, I thus readily selected an ethnographic approach.

This ethnographic study occurred in a London secondary school setting, where student participants have all spent some time removed from the mainstream classroom environment to work in an on-site withdrawal-unit. This may stem from specific learning needs, or perhaps most commonly, follow on from a period of sustained low-level disruption. The research is primarily based upon a set of semi-structured interviews (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Kvale, 2008), with additional participant observation, as well as some small group teaching by the researcher within this unit, mainly to immerse myself within this setting. I wanted to better familiarize myself with the context, learning the culture, its values, discourses and norms - as is usual within ethnographic work. The interviews and the students' perceptions of their lived experiences of marginalisation form the lion's share of the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Whilst fixing on ethnography was reasonably straightforward for me, honing in on a complementary analytic approach was decidedly messier. Ideas of coding and thematic analysis seemed to permeate much that I read about qualitative analytic approaches that would dovetail with ethnography (see e.g. Boyatzis, 1998; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). These seemed - as a scientist morphing into a social scientist - to be rather nebulous concepts. Furthermore, such techniques also seemed to have too much potential for bias and mishandling, in particular in the hands of a less experienced researcher, one who may be all the more inclined to see what they want to see; to read from the data what is not there. I sought to pin-down, adapt, supplement or enhance these hazy techniques so as to arrive at an analytic approach, which I felt, had sufficient rigour. My desire to treat the voices of the student participants with rigour, led me to seek out an analytic approach, which was reproducible and transparent, in the sense that I could walk another researcher through my analysis laying bare my readings, understandings and interpretation from the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Matthews & Ross, 2010; Wolcott, 1994).

Hammersley (1992), in discussing the outcomes of research, asserted: *"Judge the validity of claims on the basis of the adequacy of the evidence offered in support of them"* (p. 69). Bearing this in mind, in this paper I focus on explaining the thinking behind my eventual choice of qualitative analytic approach, opening this up for scrutiny and then detail my approach to defend this process as a suitably rigorous form of analysis. It is through this transparency and elaboration of my analytic process, that I wish to demonstrate the soundness of my research. I elucidate the elements I drew from constructivist grounded theory, illustrating in some detail how I apply these techniques in practice and where in particular I elaborate on aspects which are all too often glossed over. It is through the explicit use of what I refer to as 'deeply embedded diagramming' at the early stages in the analytic process, that I believe I add rigour and augment the process. This greater use of diagramming is in line with recommendations from Buckley and Waring (2013), who state: "Even though recommended throughout the grounded theory literature, there remains a need for more clarification as to how diagramming can assist the researcher at all stages of the research process." (p. 169).

QUALITATIVE ANALYTIC CHOICES: DRAWING FROM GROUNDED THEORY

> Every piece of research is unique and calls for a unique methodology. We, as the researcher, have to develop it. (Crotty, 1998, p. 13-14)

Although it was evident to me that an ethnographic study would suit my needs, I had to give considerably more thought to the most suitable approach or approaches to draw from, when analysing my data.

> It is by no means a matter of plucking a methodology off the shelf. We acquaint ourselves with the various methodologies… weigh their strengths and weaknesses… One of the established methodologies may suit the task… Or perhaps none of them do and we find ourselves drawing on several methodologies, moulding them into a way of proceeding. (Crotty, 1998, p. 14)

I found myself drawn to grounded theory, which can fit well alongside ethnographic approaches. Indeed: *"*Grounded theory methods encourage using both ethnographic and interviewing approaches" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 28). My main reason for coming to grounded theory in the round is succinctly summarised with: *"*Grounded theories start with data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 3).

After all, I had chosen an ethnographic approach with the desire to foreground the lived experiences of the marginalised students and allow their voice to dictate the way forward. Pairing ethnography with grounded theory - which eschews existing theory at the outset, instead starting with data and considering what may result from it - seemed the right fit. The participants' voices would remain at the heart of the research providing the underpinnings, the foundations, the grounding for all the subsequent analysis, as opposed to becoming subordinate to some overarching externally imposed theory. Grounded theory it seemed then would suit my priorities and meet my needs.

Furthermore, a significant appeal of grounded theory was that it offered a means whereby ethnographic research - which can remain largely descriptive – may be subject to analytic scrutiny. Following Charmaz (2006), "Grounded theory methods move ethnographic research toward theoretical development by raising description to abstract categories and theoretical interpretation" (p. 23). Even once I had come to grounded theory, it remained unclear which precise form and variation, particular elements and exact implementation I might select. There exists a range of research that states that it draws its analysis from grounded theory, while varying considerably in stance and technique.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) laid the foundations for grounded theory research and had a particular interest in researching social processes. Moreover, they aimed in part to demonstrate that qualitative research could be more than observation, case-study and story-telling; that it could not only be just as analytically rigorous as quantitative methods, but also that it could go further and generate new theoretical concepts – something which even the majority of the quantitative analysis struggles to do. Thus grounded theory, with its focus on creating new theoretical ideas, certainly made ambitious claims for qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) set out systematic guidelines for analysing qualitative data, in such a way that - through this ever-deeper process - theory is constructed from this data. I was drawn to their approach not only as the entire process stems from the data then; the systematic guidelines appealed to the former-scientist in me, providing a clear structure. The centralisation of the examination of social processes also aligned with my desire to consider links and relationships within my analysis. Moreover, the bold claims of greater analytic rigour, as well as the possibility of generating new theoretical concepts, once again struck a chord with me.

Later Strauss (1987) deviated somewhat from this original approach, emphasising verification over discovery and allowing for more flexible qualitative analysis of research where the procedures are less

stringently applied and the researcher is more free, for example to record interviews, discuss the data and supplement the data analysis process with experiential data. This relaxing of the rigid application of the rules in favour of more flexibly applied broader guidelines sat more readily with my evolving positionality - as I evolved from a positivist scientist into an interpretivist social scientist - and I was drawn closer to the work of Strauss.

In fact, the version of grounded theory I have found to fit best with my current positionality is that outlined by Charmaz (2006). She advocates a more constructivist version of grounded theory, finding Glaser and Strauss to be too positivist for her position.

> In the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as it emerges from the data separate from the scientific observer. Unlike their position, I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10)

Thus after careful consideration of some of the twists and turns within the grounded theory research community, I built my analytic approach to scrutinizing my data on a process of qualitative analysis, based on principles underpinning the original grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and revised later by Strauss (1987), and subsequently Charmaz (2006). It is the version of constructivist grounded theory put forward by Charmaz (2006), which most heavily influenced my thinking and which is most closely aligned with my approach here.

In moving forward with exploring these grounded theory techniques, which I found so promising in so many ways, I remained acutely aware of seeking clarity at each stage. What still troubled me was that in coming to the data with a whole variety of 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer, 1954), as well as my own presumptions, analysis perhaps inevitably takes place in a messy exchange between data, such sensitising concepts and the researcher's preconceptions, hunches and prejudices, rather than neatly 'emerging'- in any rigorous and reproducible sense - from the data. It is precisely in an attempt to clarify this hazy process of so-called 'emergence' that I am seeking here to exemplify, illustrate and endeavour to pin-down how it might be that codes and tentative social processes can stem from the data and yet do so with as much rigour as possible.

QUALITATIVE ANALYTIC CHOICES: MY ANALYTIC APPROACH

> I view grounded theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages... I emphasise flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes, and requirements… researchers can adopt and adapt them. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 9)

Here I intend to make clear my particular analytic approach, drawn and adapted from grounded theory, not only so that my research can be readily scrutinized but also to lay bare how it is that the voices and experiences of the participants underpin and hold up the insights I glean from the data.

In essence, the steps I took were: free writing, initial coding, clustering, memoing, focused coding and diagramming. As I illustrate and elaborate on what I mean by each of these terms, it should become

clear that this is neither a linear nor a fixed structure. In some instances, I may loop around in a cyclical fashion, repeating the memoing, focused coding and diagramming stages in particular. Furthermore, any distinction between the phases of memoing, focused coding and diagramming is somewhat artificial as these interweave and co-evolve as I move forward with my analysis. It is my particular take on deploying diagramming at the very early stages of analysis, where each link of a diagram remains closely tied to specific data extracts, which I feel not only provides detail often glossed over but also crucially starts to pin-down and add greater rigour and reproducibility, to one of the less precise, hazier, more elusive components of grounded theory techniques.

Freewriting

As a starting point to analyse an interview, I listen again to the audio and reflect on it in an open, unstructured, *ad hoc* manner, producing a piece of freewriting which could take the form of fragments of thought, connections, memories, associations, feelings, concerns, notes, questions or indeed any passing thought. The benefit to such a free, unrestrained start is that it is less intimidating than some more structured openings may be. It "liberates your thoughts and feelings. It… may save you hours of staring at a blank screen" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 88).

The freewrite serves a second important purpose, as something tangible to return to at any point in the analytic process, in particular when it may stall and falter, to refresh the situation, breath new life into a flagging process and to stimulate further ideas.

Recording and Transcribing Interviews and Keeping Track

One core reason I record my interviews, links to attention to detail and concerns how I treat the data afterwards. In particular I want to be able to see when *"questions don't work or force the data"* (Charmaz, 2006, p32). Indeed, I feel strongly that as a beginner researcher in particular, having this chance to see if I have used leading questions, persuasion, suggestion or any form of direction to bend the data towards some conscious or subconscious, half-awakened connection to a favoured sensitizing concept, or preferred rationale, seemed crucial as part of seeking greater rigour.

As an organisational aid, for each semi-structured interview, after I transcribe the audio file, I convert the document into an excel spreadsheet file so that as I advance through analytical stages it is simple to keep track of exactly where extracts but also the codes, social processes and diagrams stem from, by making reference to the row number.

Table 1. Coding spreadsheet example.

	A
4	LWE: And do you remember enjoying Primary? Was that a fun time?
5	B: Yeah it was alright. Everyone got along. Yeah it was fine.
6	LWE: And so Year 6 for example when you are coming towards the end of
7	Primary, SATs and things, did you like all the subjects equally? Were you better
8	at one than another?
9	B: I found it difficult. I had to have like some assistance with like the SATs and
10	stuff so when it was the real SATs exams I did have to have assistance, I had to
11	have the teacher sit there and read the questions to me, so I found that quite
12	embarrassing at that time because everyone else didn't have it but I did.
13	LWE: So was that in the same room?
14	B: Yeah.
15	LWE: Oh, that's a bit strange.
16	B: And I didn't like...Yeah.
17	LWE: So was that ... did they give that an official name? Like did they you were
18	dyslexic or did they say there was some particular...
19	B: No not really. I just found it difficult. When I'm was reading the question it
20	wouldn't go into my head and I would like write something different and it
21	wouldn't relate to the question so ...
22	LWE: So you found the help actually really useful?
23	B: Yeah and I got quite good marks from that as well and I think if I didn't have
24	the teacher there then I wouldn't have got the good marks that I did.

This is in line with advice from Strauss, where he recommends that the researcher: "Note the techniques that facilitate quick scanning and sorting later in the research process… Sometimes the relevant lines of the interview or other document are referred to by page" (Strauss, 1987, p. 68).

I then begin my more structured analysis through coding within these spreadsheets.

Initial Coding

> Coding is the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43).

Initially, I code my data interview by interview, choosing to code the entire interview even when the discussion strays from the topic of education. This is done not only to stay open to the entirety of the data and any and all possibilities but also out of respect for the words and thoughts of the participants.

In accordance with the practice put forward by Glaser (1978) and taken on board by Charmaz (2006), I code by gerunds. This is done to keep the analysis active and thus hopefully more readily highlight any emergent social processes.

Table 2. Coding spreadsheet example.

	A	B
4	LWE: And do you remember enjoying Primary? Was that a fun time?	
5	B: Yeah it was alright. Everyone got along. Yeah it was fine.	getting along
6	LWE: And so Year 6 for example when you are coming towards the end of	
7	Primary, SATs and things, did you like all the subjects equally? Were you better	
8	at one than another?	
9	B: I found it difficult. I had to have like some assistance with like the SATs and	finding it difficult
10	stuff so when it was the real SATs exams I did have to have assistance, I had to	helping
11	have the teacher sit there and read the questions to me, so I found that quite	sitting together
12	embarrassing at that time because everyone else didn't have it but I did.	being embarassed
13	LWE: So was that in the same room?	
14	B: Yeah.	
15	LWE: Oh, that's a bit strange.	
16	B: And I didn't like...Yeah.	not liking
17	LWE: So was that ... did they give that an official name? Like did they you were	
18	dyslexic or did they say there was some particular...	
19	B: No not really. I just found it difficult. When I'm was reading the question it	finding it difficult
20	wouldn't go into my head and I would like write something different and it	reading
21	wouldn't relate to the question so ...	not relating
22	LWE: So you found the help actually really useful?	
23	B: Yeah and I got quite good marks from that as well and I think if I didn't have	helping suceeding
24	the teacher there then I wouldn't have got the good marks that I did.	

After my initial coding[1], as a next step in analyzing a particular interview, I group these codes in cluster diagrams.

Clustering

Producing cluster diagrams is a first pass at the coded data, a means of creating a path through the material, to illuminate connections between codes, highlight prevalent codes and provide a visualization to suggest possibilities for moving forward. Clustering "offers a diagram of relationships" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 86).

Clustering is by no means unique and it is customary to cluster the same group of codes, from an extract or from an entire interview, in several different ways. A cluster diagram is again a tool that may – or may not – facilitate analytic insight, perhaps revealing dominant central codes, or groups of similar or contrasting codes. These dominant codes, or groups of similar codes, could then form the basis of memos.

I begin my analysis of each interview then by utilizing the processes of freewriting, initial coding and clustering and find that freewriting, clustering, or both generate some initial ideas for the next analytic stage, that of memoing.

Memoing

Memo writing in grounded theory is done for analytic reasons (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Indeed, for me, it is undoubtedly within my memoing, that I undertake most of my analytic work. Initially my memos are drawn from one interview at a time – stimulated by developing thoughts, perhaps from freewriting, or dominant codes, perhaps made evident through clustering, or similarities and

[1] Strauss (1987) defines coding as *"the general term for conceptualizing data; thus, coding includes raising questions and giving provisional answers (hypotheses) about categories and about their relations. A code is the term for any product of this analysis (whether category or a relation among two or more categories"* (p. 20). I take this on board and in fact see the distinction between - and precise definition of - a code and a category as ambiguous at best, thus I use the term code, where perhaps others may sometimes use code and other times category. I see these as analytical tools that form part of my process but which would not remain specifically labelled as a code or a category in the final theorizing and hence I see the overarching term code as fit for my purposes.

differences coming from freewriting, clustering or both. Memoing "prompts you to elaborate processes, assumptions and actions covered by your codes" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 82).

I am determined to keep close to my data and so each memo is titled by a code and consists of those extracts of data, coded with this particular code. Within the memo, each extract is then commented upon and this is the opportunity to evaluate data, consider emergent processes, critique, reflect, query, raise questions and debate implied meanings. This grounding of the layers of analysis within the data is central to grounded theory techniques. Strauss (1987) for instance advises researchers to: "note also in all memos how the data are drawn upon, are interwoven with, and inform the analytic content of each memo" (p. 110).

Strauss notes that many initial memos may be practical reminders, 'bright ideas', 'fumbling around', and 'thinking aloud'. Yet as the analysis moves forward, later memos: "focus on emerging major categories and their relationships with each other… struggle with whether to choose one or more core categories; integratively summarize previous memos and coding" (Strauss, 1987, p. 109-110).

Certainly, as I progress with memo-writing, I find more and more that later memos pull ideas together from previous memos. Not only do I find this, within the analysis of one interview but also I find that threads, codes, ideas, comparisons and contrasts cut across the interviews and thus some memos begin to draw from different participants to consolidate and flesh out the same concepts or processes.

Focused Coding

Focused coding is inherently embedded within much of my later memoing. Charmaz (2006) says that focused coding is used later in the process to "pinpoint and develop the most salient categories in large batches of data. Theoretical integration begins with focused coding" (p. 46). Indeed, it could be argued that many of my later memos, drawing from several different interviews, are best described as elaborations on central codes and core processes, considered and revealed through just such focused coding. Any attempt to disentangle where memoing, focused coding and diagramming begin and end within my research analysis would be an onerous and unnecessary task.

Diagramming

The technique of diagramming emergent processes features heavily within my memoing and is deeply interwoven with this memoing and with the focused coding.

Diagramming, as with so many tools, serves several purposes within the increasingly complex layers of analysis, from succinctly representing a feature of the data, through making gaps in the data evident, providing a framework for integrating ideas emerging from the data, to acting as an on-going summary of relationships, flows and processes emerging from the analysis of the data. Diagrams are: "records of questions, blind spots, and gaps, as well as increasingly complex syntheses of the data. This visual "story" of the thesis process is a useful organizational tool" (Strauss, 1987, p. 179).

As I move on through the process, more integrative diagrams are evident.

> An integrative diagram helps to give a clearer picture of where you have come from in the research after all that data collecting, coding, and memoing. It puts together into a larger pattern, however provisional, a lot of otherwise scattered material – or scattered

> sense of those materials – into a sense that this project 'has really gone somewhere' (Strauss, 1987, p. 185).

Diagramming in grounded theory is most commonly used and certainly most frequently reported in this integrative sense, as a visual representation to summarise relationships between 'big codes' or categories, at advanced stages of attempting to construct theoretical concepts from the data (Strauss, 1987; Charmaz, 2006). Whilst I make some use of integrative diagramming, it is my earlier abundant use of lower-level diagramming, which I believe is key to adding rigour. In the replication of a complete memo below, the stage at which I am utilising diagramming is far earlier in the process. Thus my diagrams are also much more tightly embedded in the data. Indeed, it is this deployment and reporting of diagramming at the very early stages of analysis, with each link of a diagram explicitly labelled to refer to particular data extracts, which I believe provides often omitted detail. Through use of these deeply embedded, low-level diagrams I flesh out this initial stage of analysis, enhancing reproducibility and adding greater rigour to one of the often more opaque and elusive components of the grounded theory process.

ILLUSTRATION OF MY ANALYTIC APPORACH: A MEMO - 'NOT HELPING'

Through the replication of a complete memo here, I firstly illustrate how memoing, focused coding and diagramming are inherently interwoven in these early stages of my analysis.

Moreover I detail explicitly my particular approach, implementing diagramming at these very early stages of analysis. This diagramming is deeply embedded in the data, meaning that each link of a diagram is annotated with references to the specific data extracts that support it. Such fleshing out of detail in the early stages of grounded theory analysis is absent in most research articles. It is through this use of what I refer to as 'deeply embedded diagramming', that I augment the analytic process and provide greater rigour and reproducibility.

What follows is a replication of a memo resulting from analysis of Charlie's interview, and stems from the code 'not helping'.

The Memo

Since 'helping' and 'not helping' feature so heavily I will start with one only 'not helping' first in this memo and write a later on 'helping' to contrast.

> *14: 'Year 5 I think that was that time but and then… Then when I moved up and they just… They just never helped me really…'*
> *(Coded 'not helping')*

This is the first reference to not being helped however it sheds no light on process or context really. There is merely the idea that, having been helped in primary, he was not helped in secondary 'as he moved up'.

> *67: 'But I mean at... At Welford High it's just… they didn't give me no help really...'*
> *(Coded 'not helping')*
> Nothing to add here.

70: 'I just… It was just like really classes… coz my… I gotta admit it was a bit my temper... coz where I couldn't read and they wouldn't help me I got stressed. And like that why I didn't pass English. Coz they said you can have help… like reading the questions but we can't help some other way and then I was like "ok", then when it got to it like they didn't help me… so and then I was like "well I need help I can't read this" and they was like just get along with it so then I just got stressed, ripped it up and walked out.'
(Coded 'being angry' 'not being able to read' 'not helping' 'asking' 'needing' 'not being able to read' 'being left to get on with it' 'getting stressed' 'ripping up' 'walking out')

There is part of a process here:

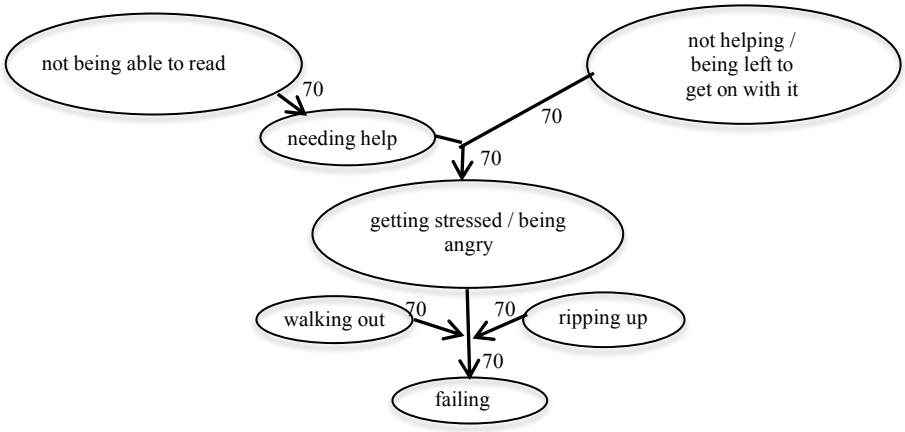

Figure 1. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

So not being able to read something implies a need for help, when this is coupled with not being helped, it leads to stress, anger and then walking out and failing. (The 'not being able to read' code itself would merit a memo on its own if all instances are not covered here).

85: 'Yeah. School... School didn't help one bit, I've gotta admit.'
(Coded 'not helping')
Statement on his view with no elaboration of a process here.

99: 'Miss Chang yeah…. like I didn't really get no help and then I went down and down and then I had I think it was like one or two lessons with you… and then like and then you got me to know it all and I got a C.'
(Coded 'not liking a teacher/lesson' 'not helping' 'failing' 'helping' 'learning' 'succeeding')

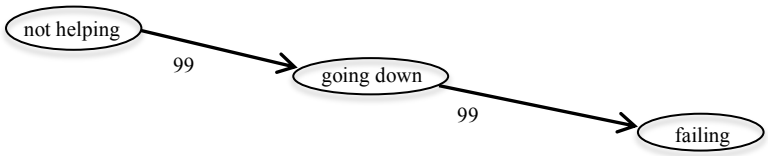

Figure 2. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

Is the only real part of the diagramming (after comment 70 above) corroborated by this extract? Perhaps the code 'failing' is too extreme here? Perhaps 'going down' would be an intermediate step on a possible path to failure?

There is an element of:

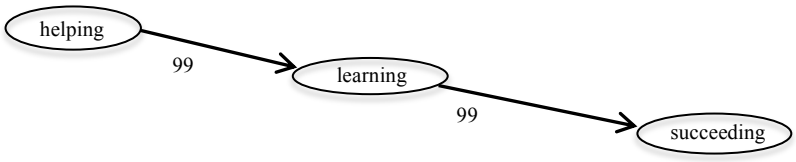

Figure 3. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

Within here also as part of a different branch.

> *146: 'Yeah I did go to Maths a bit but and then... like… I don't know it just went…. I just drifted away like… coz where English.... that just went out of the window... I was getting no help… I used to go Learning Support…'*
> *(Coded 'attending' 'drifting away' 'truanting' 'not helping' 'attending LS')*

So getting no help perhaps led to it 'going out the window' and him 'drifting away' as well as going to learning support.
(This is difficult. I know about the school system and that he goes on to talk about a member of staff, Ms. Thyme, who helped with low-attaining English students, dyslexic pupils and those with other SpLD. Here the data states he went to LS as a follow on but there is no 'so I was sent to LS for help' explicit statement. Let's carry on with the 'not helping' code to see what emerges).
(Actually NOT this code BUT 155 states *'I went in there for English and I had Ms. Thyme, I think it was'* so he is clear himself in that extract that he was withdrawn to LS for English).

Diagramming becomes:

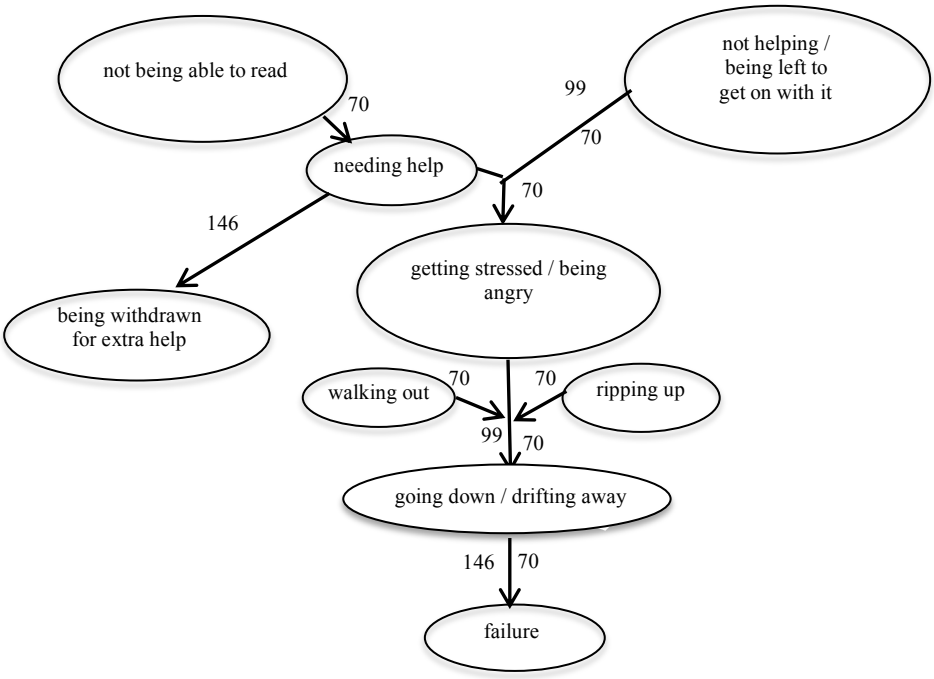

Figure 4. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

159: 'Thyme yeah her… and she always come in like gave me a bit of paper… walked off… like yeah do that… I don't know what to do…'
(Coded 'not helping' 'not knowing what to do' 'being stuck')

This actually refers to what should have been extra help in LS. This is an illustration of a situation in which he was left not knowing what to do. Being given work to do and being left to get on with it 'do that' indicates this code in fact (add code?).

Diagramming becomes:

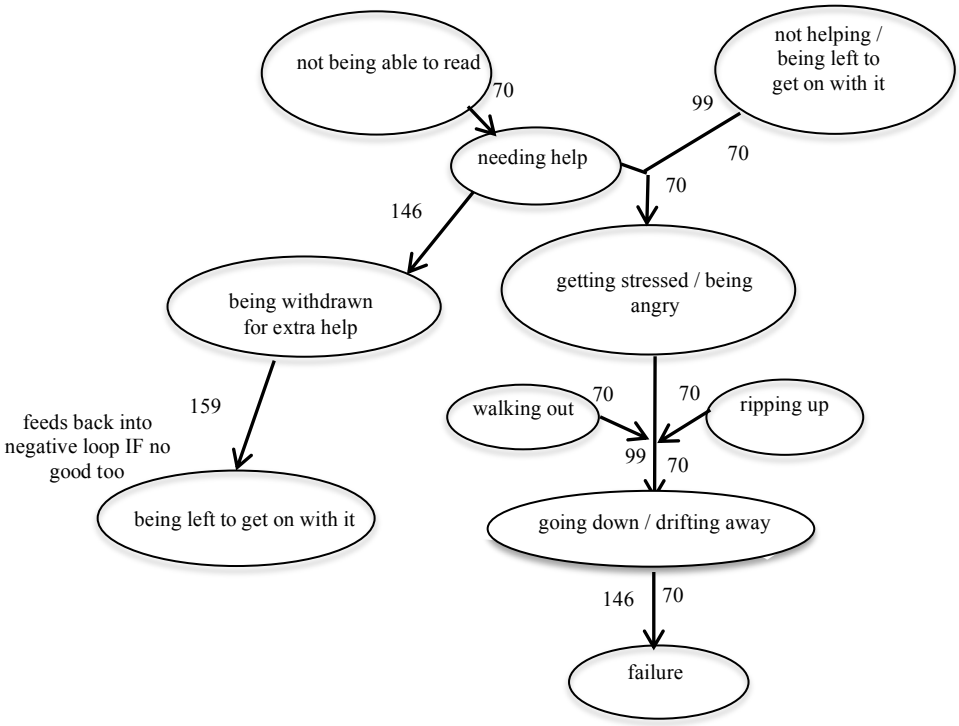

Figure 5. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

175: 'Yeah she did the Maths… she read the Maths questions for me... And then Ms. Rose was gonna do the English one… but… she was err busy I think… so they didn't have no-one with me… and then that why there was only two in the…. two people and they was like you can't get help coz they was just other people…'
(Coded 'helping' 'not helping' 'not helping')

Is there a hint at lack of available staffing or lack of available resources feeding into not being helped perhaps? The choice of 'only two' could support this.

179: 'And they were like well we can't help you coz we gotta like check everyone else…'
(Coded 'not helping' 'checking/monitoring')

175 & 179 are referring to support with assessments this final remark also seems to support that the invigilators were too busy monitoring to offer help.

311: 'It's quite helpful but aint because how I see it... I could have just not went college and still got everything I would have had and got now… like if I didn't go college like… I could have probably been better off coz I would have got a job and I would have started working and already built myself up to be like… like some of my mates I see they've already been at a company and they're like earning over a grand now…'
(Coded 'helping' 'not helping' 'not attending' 'being better off' 'working' 'improving' 'learning')

This is a different process conjectured, hypothetical here.

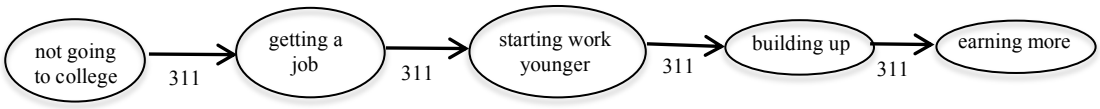

Figure 6. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

This is also him reflecting on his friends, a select portion of them presumably ('some') and speculating what may have happened. It is interesting in as much as it reflects on his feelings about his own experience and what might have been but it is not an attempt at recounting events and is hence speculation.

369: 'Wrong kind of stuff I think... yeah... because errr well we aint really had no help yet... we're just talking about alcohol and everything but…. to be fair I don't need that really… I want to sit down like, write down... they're talking about… like... all like different bits'
(Coded 'not helping' 'talking' 'not needing' 'wanting help' 'writing' 'talking')

This relates to college English classes as does the next extract with the 'not helping' code.

375: 'It's not really helping me coz we're just listening and copying off the board… So I'm no getting no knowledge into my head...'
(Coded 'not helping' 'listening' 'copying' 'not learning')

There is something here that *'just listening and copying off the board'* does not help him learn. The word *just* may be crucial as it could imply that in combinations listening and/ or copying could have a role to play. After all in 369 he states that the *'just talking'* did not help and that he wanted to write. It is hard to extract exactly why he was not learning and did not find this helpful from these extracts then.

420: 'Yes. Like some teachers they would like… they wouldn't even… they just write something on the board and you gotta figure it out… and like they don't tell you what you gotta do…. Like everyone else… some people would know but others… like me and that… I don't know and I can't and I don't want to like say coz it's embarrassing… but yeah some teachers was just like… I don't know how to like put it in like… (laughs)'
(Coded 'being left alone' 'not helping' 'not knowing what to do' 'being stuck' 'not asking' 'embarrassing')

The summary diagramming (after comment 159 above) speaks to this in part then → the 'not helping / being left to get on with it' feeding into 'being stuck / not knowing what to do' is corroborated here. There is another thread, not wanting to say *'coz it's embarrassing'*. This was a feature for Donna see Book 1 diagramming p. 24-25. So here for Charlie we have:

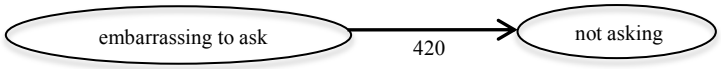

Figure 7. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

So, diagramming:

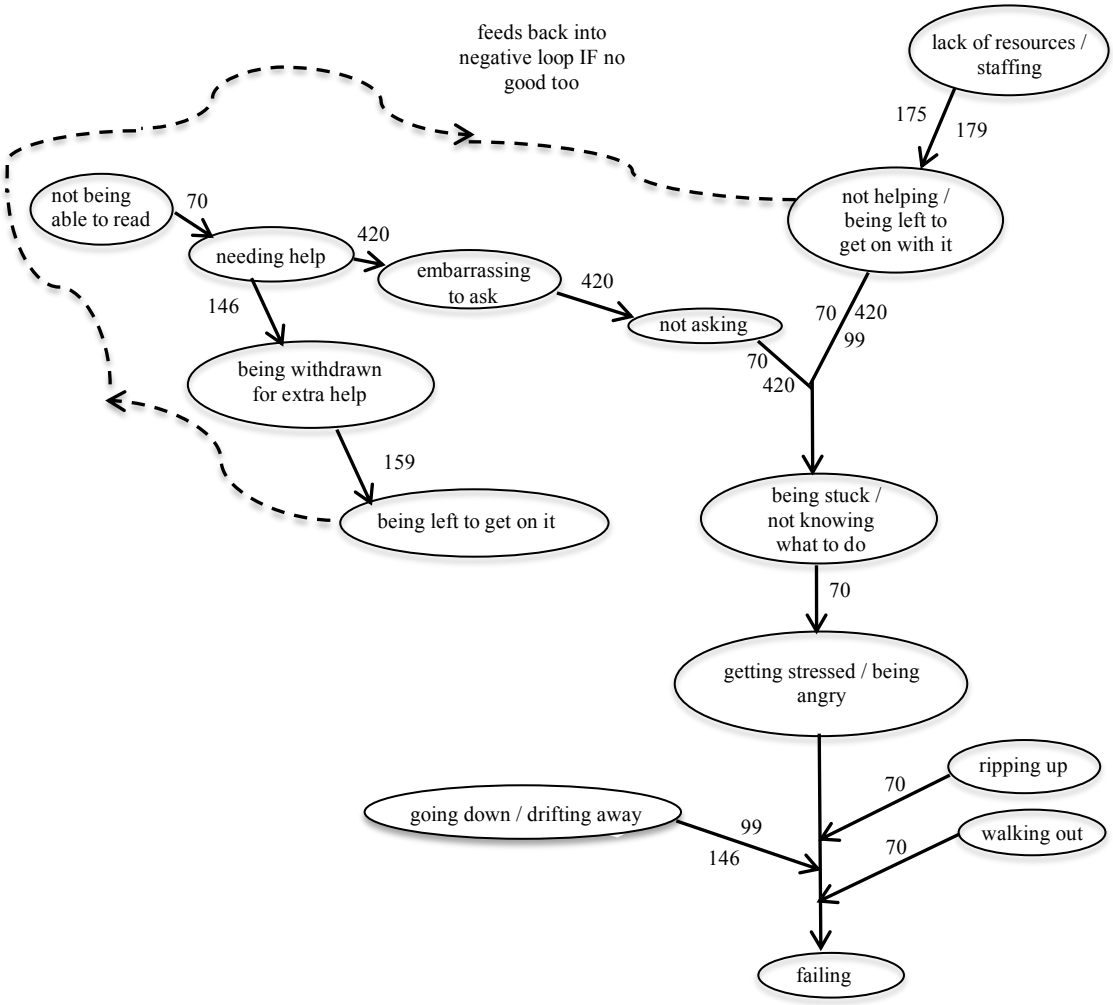

Figure 8. Example of deeply embedded low-level diagramming.

Example of Overview Diagramming for Complete Interview: From Analysis of Charlie's Interview

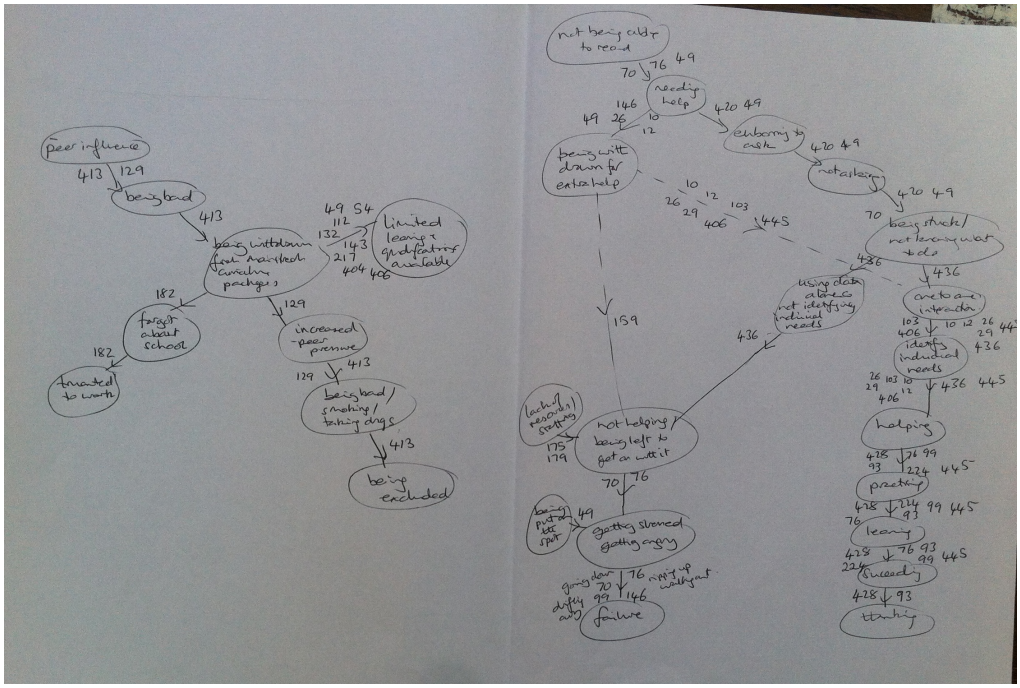

Image 1. Complete interview diagram.

CONCLUSION: SUFFICIENT RIGOUR

I have illustrated how I have applied techniques of freewriting, initial coding, clustering, memoing, focused coding and diagramming. These are drawn from grounded theory techniques and found in varying forms across much qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987)..

As noted by Buckley & Waring (2013): *"the use of diagrams still seems to be an area of unexplored potential for the development of theory" (*p. 169). I have shown here how it is that I make greater use of diagramming in the analytic process. It is my particular approach to implementing deeply embedded diagramming at the very early stages of analysis, which is detailed in the replication of a complete memo here. This deeply embedded diagramming, where each link of a diagram is strictly tied to precise data extracts, starts to pin-down and add greater rigour and reproducibility, to these initial stages of grounded theory techniques. These early stages of analysis are often omitted in the reporting of research findings.

Koch (2006) argues that the rigour of a piece of qualitative research is inherently connected to the ease with which the reader can audit the researchers decision trail. The inclusion of deeply embedded diagramming clearly facilitates such an audit and hence this augmented process may claim greater rigour.

Through repeated application of this analytic procedure, 'big codes' or categories can be identified and subsequently coalesce to form the social processes that constitute the findings of the research. Even when reporting my research findings, I intersperse the presentation of all such findings and the associated analytic discussion, with a liberal dose of salient data extracts, chosen to scaffold the

arguments. I do this in order to sustain transparency and lay bare how analysis is grounded in the data, as well as to keep student voice to the fore (Wenham, 2019). Having a plethora of low-level deeply embedded diagramming to refer to facilitates identifying extracts to include in these final writings. Once again this aims to increase rigour. Research on rigour, whether in qualitative research generally (Mays & Pope, 1995) or grounded theory more specifically (Chiovitti & Piran, 2003), repeatedly encourages the direct inclusion of original evidence and participants words in the reported findings.

It is the utilisation and inclusion of low-level, deeply embedded diagramming, which I consider to be crucial in providing much needed transparency in the very early stages of analysis. Thus, despite inevitably taking place against the fuzzy backdrop of my own hunches and sensitizing concepts, I find this enhanced analytic process to be reproducible, more transparent and indeed suitably rigorous.

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Chapter Six

Critical Participatory Action-Research: Embarking on an unpredictable journey

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ABSTRACT
This paper discusses the use of a Critical Participatory Action Research approach in the case of a doctoral project located at the intersection of organisational and management studies, political sociology and development studies. The project investigates how civil-society organisations working in the field of international development create, develop and negotiate partnerships across transnational settings. Focusing on partnerial practices, modalities, challenges and opportunities, the study aims to generate knowledge and evidence that can enhance the capacity of organisations to establish and foster sustainable, interdependent and effective partnerships. This article examines iterative processes of analysis and experimental methods of analysis, revealing how these align with the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the research, and how they respond to challenges that arise throughout a one-year multi-sited organisational immersion. The researcher shares reflexive insights and personal experiences that will prove valuable for other scholars and practitioners engaged in critical applied social research.

KEYWORDS
Critical Participatory Action-Research; international development; messiness; ethico-onto-epistemologies; organisational immersion; participation

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the opportunities and challenges of using a Critical Participatory Action-Research approach (CPAR) to study partnerships between non-governmental organisations working in the field of international development. CPAR is an approach specifically suited for the engagement of groups and individuals that are considered vulnerable and/or marginalised. It is embedded in a transformatory, emancipating and critical paradigm, that seeks the empowerment of all partakers in any given project (Fine, 2012; Torre *et al.*, 2012; Howell, 2013; Sandwick *et al.*, 2018). CPAR unfolds through embedded and active research, inherently unpredictable in its unfolding; it is a dynamic analytical endeavour.

Throughout this paper, analysis is not conceptualised as *methods*, nor is it referred to as the step towards producing results, outputs, data and evidence. Rather, analysis is explored as a set of *multidimensional processes and practices* that unfold in different times, spaces and levels. These processes and practices are experimental, critical, iterative, interactive, evolving and self-reflective. They entail questioning the research, its conceptualisation, the words that are used to refer to it, and the meanings behind these words; the implications of the research, on the settings, the participants and the researcher; its scope and outcomes; how the research perpetrates social hierarchies or norms. Analysis is a continuum that extends throughout each and every phase, process and interaction of the research.

I develop this understanding of analysis through the exploration of the conceptual and theoretical tensions when working in the development field, and consider how CPAR might be an approach particularly suited to addressing organisational issues of power, authority and control. I follow with a critical consideration of the concepts that define the scope and realms of the project, delving into the associated meanings and how the framing of the research reproduces narratives of exclusion and division. To illustrate the idea of *analysis as a continuum*, I introduce the practice of daily diarying inspired from Coffey's (1999) adaptation of LeCompte and Preissle's conditions of the fieldwork. Here, the researcher' own analytical and self-reflexive accounts of the fieldwork aim to explore the experiential nature and unfolding of the immersion, whilst examining the different ways in which data is generated, and how data is generated *through* and *within* the researcher. I conclude the article with some reflections on the intrinsic messiness of using such an approach, before developing insights on the methodological, epistemic and ethical opportunities that arise from embracing this messiness.\

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Origins of the study

Throughout my 3-year doctoral research, I am investigating transnational partnerships between civil-society organisations from the Global North and the Global South. The research was co-designed by my supervisors and the civil-society partners who took an active part in the drafting of the project, research scope, aim and questions. Currently in my second year, I am carrying out multi-sited immersions in a UK-based charity and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) located in Nepal. Both organisations are non-profit, non-political, non-religious and non-governmental, and seek to tackle extreme poverty through community-based projects in remote areas in Nepal.

This study aims to uncover the ways in which practical, managerial, organisational, methodological and theoretical challenges might bear effects on the partnership that both organisations developed 15 years ago. There is a focus on the dynamic processes that have been developed over that time period, as well as those that continue to be developed, and the inherent issues, tensions and challenges that have composed or compose the relationship between both entities. The research aims to generate knowledge and evidence that can enhance the capacity of organisations from the development sector to establish and foster sustainable, interdependent and effective partnerships.

Research questions explore:

- *Creation, design and development of the partnership;*

- *Evolution of the partnership over time;*
- *Ways in which both organisations are developing partnerships with other national and international actors;*
- *Influence of these 'extrapartnerships' on the partnership at hand and vice versa.*

Here, the partnership is studied at multiple levels: the individuals who are part of the contexts and structures under investigation, the organisations that compose the partnership, and the societies in which this partnership is embedded. The partnership, itself, is being explored as an active component of the research: as an entity, as an organisational setting or structuration, as a participant, as an object of inquiry, as a subject of investigation (what can the partnership reveal about the individuals, the organisations and the settings in which it is embedded?). This specific analytical standpoint enables me to explore five interdependent investigative settings: both organisations, both contexts, and the partnership.

In effect, I am dealing here with multiple settings, contexts and objects of inquiry – or spaces, places and subjects of research. These draw from different paradigmatic, disciplinary and theoretical framings that I review below.

Disciplinary and theoretical framing of the study

This interdisciplinary research is situated at the intersection and within the overlaps of three disciplines: political sociology (Giddens, 1976; Janoski *et al.*, 2005), management and organisational studies (MOS) (Reed, 2006), and development studies. For all three disciplines, I embrace a critical stance, recognising the pervasiveness of issues spanning control, power, and authority. Interpersonal/inter-intraorganisational conflict, levels of hierarchies, invisible inequalities, asymmetries and imbalances are also analysed. Critical theories offer a framework concerned with issues spanning exploitation, oppression, questions of legitimacy, injustice, privilege, conflict, all very much related to the development sector.

Taking an ecological approach to MOS (Baum and Shipilov, 2006) allows a focus on the diversity and singularity of organisational identities, and the relations between the organisations and the environments they are established in and interact with. A critical approach to MOS enables an appreciation of the realms, enactments, and 'complex webs' (Lotia and Hardy, 2009, p. 2) of power in which the partnership protagonists are situated; this will support the revealing of mechanisms of power, domination and control that condition decision-making processes (Alvesson and Deetz, 2014). Engaging with post-colonial, decolonial, and feminist theories informs and determines the relational dynamics with and between the participants, the organisations, and the settings involved in the research and beyond. Post-colonial theories applied to this study support the uncovering of ongoing manifestations of discrimination and inequalities in the treatment of developing contexts and processes of othering. In turn, Southern theories seek to question the universalism of the imposed Western theorisation of the world and aim to revise the knowledge production modalities and streams (Rosa, 2014). Feminist theories seek to address the alienation of marginalised, vulnerable and invisible groups, the processes of othering and (re)presenting the other (Spivak, 1983; Maguire, 1996; Coffey, 1999; Fine, 2012; Pickering and Kara, 2017), whilst feminist epistemologies encompass fragmented perspectives, intersectionality and situated knowledges (Harding, 1992; Crenshaw, 1994; Mohanty, 2013; Doucet, 2018).

These epistemic and theoretical underpinnings deconstruct not only the intra- and inter-organisational relations, but also the role of the research and the researcher involved therein. Thus, I am not concerned only with the forms of domination that take place within the organisations or the partnership. I am also attentive to the ways in which the contexts and their historical legacies actuate the domination; and how I perpetrate, challenge or channel domination throughout my academic endeavour, as a white European woman holding freedoms and opportunities that might conflict with those of the contexts I come to work in.

Aligning with the epistemic and theoretical standpoints as outlined above, I undertook a critical contemplation on the concepts and terms being used in all three disciplines. This exercise contributed to revealing to what level epistemic situatedness and domination resonates throughout the entire framing of the research.

CRITICALITY AND MESSINESS FROM INCEPTION

Working within, around and beyond normative concepts

The following paragraph is taken from my research presentations:

> *Civil society organisations, of which charities and NGOs, are central protagonists of the development scene since the 1950s. They seek to assist, support and empower vulnerable and marginalised groups in fragile settings towards poverty eradication and social justice. Partnerships between these organisations have been crucial in delivering projects and programmes in remote and fragile contexts, whilst attempting to remedy the social, cultural, political or environmental factors. However, over the past decades, international development has evolved considerably. New actors, priorities and discourses are changing the modalities and practices of not-for profit interventions. Better understanding how these 'traditional' actors collaborate and intervene can inform their strategies towards achieving the development goals set out in global agendas and adapting to new challenges and institutional constraints. Using participatory methods, we aim to generate evidence that will support organisations to develop and foster more sustainable and efficient partnerships.*

This is a descriptive paragraph which attempts to depict the aim and scope of my research. The writing of such a text is an intrinsic part of every research project. It allows for the displaying of a scholar's capacity to explain the undertaking of the study, and the expected outcomes of such an endeavour. However, as simple as the exercise might seem, it reveals in itself a number of ethical, epistemic and conceptual issues. In the framing of this research, semantic and nomenclatural challenges appear, mostly with the terms used, their multiple interpretations and the political usage(s) they serve. Interrogating the concepts used to describe and define the research sheds light on academic situatedness, and the role of social research in the perpetration of systemic inequalities. The following exercise is therefore crucial for the researcher working in the development field.

Throughout the past decades, the development jargon has been critiqued as perpetrating and, in some instances, feeding into a strategic dichotomisation of the world (Sachs, 2010). Terms such as *development*, *empowerment*, *emancipation, Global North, Global South*, *participation*… have contributed to objectifying regions, countries, communities and individuals. They constitute tacit

oppositional standpoints and paradigms, dividing the world between 'positives' and 'negatives': development is coupled with underdevelopment (Esteva, 2010), empowerment with disempowerment, emancipation with lack of freedom… As such, when referring to development today, what comes to mind is primarily poverty, war, displacement, malnutrition or illnesses. The term has turned into a rhetorical referential to designate the lack, paucity and absence of human rights, freedoms, opportunities, resources, agency, material comfort, wellbeing and money.

Similarly, civil society is mainly conceptualised as a homogeneous entity that either requires assistance (through aid intervention: emergency, service or provision delivery) or structuring (through programmatic intervention: strengthening, empowerment, capacity-building). These interventional narratives overlook geographical, societal and structural rifts. They harmonise spaces and places, with centres, peripheries and margins seen as spatial depictions, rather than sets of inclusionary/exclusionary social policies and strategies, as well as constructs of inequality. They do not allow for fragmented, disarticulated or disharmonious experiences of these civil societies; nor do they engage with possible intragroup conflict or political instrumentalisation. Too often are the voices of those composing given civil societies not called upon in the exercise of its/their conceptualisation. In the same way, 'uncivil' societies are not recognised as exploring alternatives against government corruption, civic alienation or capitalist ventures.

The concept of participation also holds tensions and judgemental attributes. The participation paradigm in development stems from the works of Sen (1999) on freedom, capabilities and development; Chambers (1983) on rural development and participatory research methods; and Freire (2005) on oppression, freedom and justice. Informed by these authors, participation in my research stands for a political, rights- and human-oriented interactional mode of relationship destined to achieve grounded and global social justice and transformation. It can be approached as a philosophy, a practice, a methodology, a set of techniques, or a discourse (Rahnema, 1992; Freire, 1998, 2005; Cooke and Kothari, 2001). For the past decades, there has been a focus on making development a participatory endeavour, believing this would rectify previous interventions that had not engaged local populations in their designs or processes. Since then, claims have been made that participation has been abused and instrumentalised in such ways that it might have lost its capacity to challenge the status quo and tackle power imbalance (White, 1996). Cooke and Kothari (2001) have argued that participation has been co-opted, diluted and/or strategised and has become a manifestation of a new development orthodoxy, that serves to maintain or reinforce unequal relations and processes.

Over time, these concepts have shifted from descriptive or structuring, and have become a set of practices, civic and societal status, and conditions that should be aspired for. By suggesting that there are political or societal characteristics (of governance, of inter-relation, of identity) that are more desirable than others, these concepts have narrowed perceptions and understandings of the systemic and structural dimensions of poverty and global asymmetries. They have encouraged individuals and nations to seek for a linear pathway to change, whilst dismissing determinants of inequality. They have become worldviews and paradigms, carving exclusionary mindsets, principles and relations.

How can such challenges be mediated throughout a transcultural and transnational project? How can social research contribute in creating spaces, places and times for questioning and reflecting? In the following section, I introduce and develop the research approach used throughout this project.

PATHWAYS TO AND THROUGH CRITICAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION-RESEARCH

Introducing Action-Research

Action-research (AR) is referred to as an approach, a methodology, a project, methods, an experiment (Lewin, 1946, cited in Howell, 2013), sometimes even interchangeably or aggregately (Carter and Little, 2007; Howell, 2013). For the purpose of this paper, I will use the denomination *approach* when referring to AR, making the argument that *approach* * entails an intersubjective philosophical stance, * involves an interactional mode of engaging with the world and its inhabitants, and * suggests that it is not finite or limited in time or scope.

AR is particularly suited for research in management and organisational studies (Gill and Johnson, 2002) as well as development studies. It departs from 'real-world issues' and seeks to address them through the identification of tangible and practical solutions that can be implemented by the communities of inquiry involved in the study. Bryman (2012) defines it as 'an approach in which the action researcher and members of a social setting collaborate in the diagnosis of a problem and in the development of a solution based on the diagnosis' (p. 397). It proposes a set of values and practices (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood and Maguire, 2003; Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Greenberg and Mathoho, 2010; Bryman, 2012; Mackenzie *et al.*, 2012; Howell, 2013):

- an experimental and iterative relation to the research process;
- inclusive and innovative roles for researcher and participants;
- the centrality of participation, action and reflection throughout the research process;
- the application of theories and knowledge through action and practice;
- new modalities of knowledge production.

The approach is conceptualised as a series of cycles constituted of an 'action phase' followed by a 'reflection phase' followed by an 'action phase' and so forth, each phase informing the subsequent (Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Mackenzie *et al.*, 2012). The reference to *phases* implies that they occur in disassociated ways, one rolling into another, in a causal manner. I conceptualise these phases as *processes*, given that action takes place during reflection and reflection takes place during action, with action and reflection overlapping and merging. These processes are carried out through an active participation of the participants throughout the research: they are involved in all stages of the research design (aims, questions, foci), research enactment (data generation and analysis) and research findings (applying the knowledge and recommendations formulated through the theorisation of the identified issue).

Previous professional experiences have made me grow weary of the institutionalisation of transformative and emancipatory approaches and their co-optation for political and financial purposes. Whilst working in the development sector using this approach, I have found that the 'action' in AR can be confined to some very contained and safe *stages*, *relations* and *practices*. The participation of communities of inquiry was negotiated and strategised and had been stripped to a bare minimum. There were tangible tensions that were overlooked between the ideal of the approach and the enactment of the approach. External constraints and factors contributed to the dilution of the AR: funds, timelines and contexts made it unrealistic for the action to be carried out in any other way than *urgent, convenient, controlled and strategised*. The 'label' made the project attractive to donors, when really, the research was neither emancipatory nor transformative. In practice, participants were invited

to partake in a workshop or focus groups, and in the actioning of recommendations, rather than engaged in the identification of the issue or plausible answers to remedy the given problem.

Investigating the AR spectrum

I was eager to look into other possible versions or enactments of AR that might acknowledge and address these experienced shortcomings. Participatory Action-Research (PAR) seemed to suit the research better, as it is contextually located, rooted in a community-oriented approach. It entails immersed participation of the researcher through sharing the participants' daily lives and 'endeavors to understand, tolerate, and respect different genders, cultures, and races and to heed the voice of Others' (Fals Borda, 1996, p. 4). Knowledge is created, developed, understood, and owned by all participants involved, disregarding elitist, scientific or academic narratives (Fals Borda, 1996), aligned with participatory epistemological frameworks that posit respectful relationships between all involved at the centre of the research, with a foci on social justice and empowerment (Liebenberg, Wood and Wall, 2018).

PAR responded to some of my concerns; however, I was eager to find an approach better suited to a critical reading and engagement with historical legacies of imperialism, colonialism and division. I found that Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) draws on critical theories and is embedded in an ecological paradigm. The participation of communities of inquiry enables to highlight the 'disparities in the distribution of opportunities, resources, and dignity; challenge ideological categories that are projected onto communities […]; and identify how 'science' has been utilized as a tool to legitimize dominant policies and practices' (Torre *et al.*, 2012 summarised in Koro-Ljungberg, 2016, p. 189). It embraces the principles deriving from feminist and Indigenous ethico-onto-epistemologies (Barad, 2007, developed in Kara, 2018): relational accountability, communality of knowledge, reciprocity and benefit sharing.

Drawing from a plurality of ethico-onto-epistemologies (Barad, 2007) and critical theoretical standpoints, CPAR is embedded within transformative, emancipatory and radical paradigms (Howell, 2013) of participation and social change. In its enactment, CPAR is resolutely transdisciplinary – it brings together communities from different horizons and sectors, practitioners, activists and scholars, towards responding to social issues that affect vulnerable groups. What emerges from CPAR is an attention to the multidimensional and multi-layered notions of power, may they be systemic, structural, institutional, individual… Throughout the enactment of the approach to its effects and outputs, CPAR seeks to interrogate the deeply rooted and normative perpetration of inequalities, domination, asymmetries, imbalance, injustice, privilege, hierarchies, op-/re-pression, and conflict. This in the relation to the humans and settings involved in the research, the knowledge generated throughout the research and its effects on the communities it involves. CPAR engages actively with relational, intra-actional and pedagogical paradigms. It is particularly suited for studies in the development sector, as it allows for an acknowledgment of micro, meso and macro levels of power.

As much as the philosophical and epistemological standpoint might glorify and simplify the approach, in real-life, the enactment of CPAR is a challenging, complex and messy venture. In the following section, I discuss how the messiness is diverse, and the questions that arise from being invested and embedded therein.

CARVING OUT AND MAKING SENSE OF THE MESSINESS

CPAR falls under the *methodologies without methodology* spectrum (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016), which posits a lack of boundaries, margins and defining structure as a foundational paradigm. There is a clear ethnographic component to this study – the immersion within contexts and settings of inquiry, daily interactions with the participants and the organisations, learning from the settings, uncovering and revealing practices… However, this project goes beyond ethnographic research in multiple ways. Sykes and Treleaven (2009) argue that the differences between ethnography and critical action research lie in the following: the positions of the researcher, the co-construction of knowledge and the power relations. I would add to these: the questioning of labels and knowledge, messiness as an inherent and continuous process and praxis, working within, beyond, around and over theoretical and methodological frameworks, and an in-progress redefining of ethical axiologies. Below, I develop some preliminary thoughts on these points.

The researcher and participant enacting a plurality of roles

CPAR seeks to break down binary positions and identities such as insider-outsider, observer-observed, us-them, researcher-practitioner, researcher-participant. The engagement with research, participants and contexts is political, emancipatory and transformative. The researchers, the research and the research process, come together in actively addressing the prevalence and permeating of normative narratives and stereotypes that portray groups as homogenous, dysfunctional, and destitute. There is no distancing between/from the researcher and the researchers, the contexts, the action and the reflection (Sykes and Treleaven, 2009). Researchers are not the knowledge-bearers and makers; instead, they are facilitators of processes of epistemic arising. In the same way, participants are not seen solely as a medium through which data is collected and gathered to inform the researcher on the study being carried out. CPAR participants are considered co-researchers, partaking in designing the direction of the research (Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Sandwick *et al.*, 2018). Aligned with feminist and decolonial epistemologies, participants hold situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988): they are epistemic meaning-makers, as well as facilitators to settings and contexts. Criticality and reflexivity are reciprocal, which means that participants question and activate own conceptualisations as well as critical knowledges and identities throughout the research (Fox, 2011). Recognising the diversity, agency and situatedness of individuals within the group, and the plurality of emerging accounts and experiences, allows to shift and break-down the social polarisation that endures through the 'us-them' paradigms.

The AR researcher can be considered as 'a hybrid of scholar/activist in which neither role takes precedence' (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood and Maguire, 2003, p. 20). Roles are not *linear*, *static*, *ascribed* or *limited* (context or time-bound): rather, they are *fluid*, *contested*, *temporary*, *shifting* and *improvised*, entwined between the personal and professional experiences of self. There is a genuine ongoing negotiation of challenges and opportunities in 'playing' and 'acting' different roles, that sways between performative and adaptive. Roles include, but are not limited to:

- organising (coordination, management, negotiation, facilitation, planning),
- sense-/meaning-making (analysis, reporting, dissemination, knowledge & findings generating),
- conflict-engaging (mediation, moderation, resolution),
- pedagogical educator (communicating, advocating, translating),
- catalyst (engagement, motivation).

In the case of CPAR, it is not only about the roles. Fox (2011) describes the researcher's aim as follows: 'To trouble social representations (…) and put forward new liberatory visions' (p. 343). That means that for each of these roles, multiple interactions and instances of the research can be explored and analysed. Attributed positionalities and identities are revisited and reinvented, bringing down paradigmatic rifts. The experimental nature of these *roles without boundaries* requires that the researcher explores situatedness, positionality and identity throughout the research and beyond. Methods such as inter-subjectivity, reflexivity and diffraction can offer some guidelines and insights into manoeuvring new territories.

Multi-embeddedness: tools to journal the journey

'Playing' these different roles and aiming to 'trouble' means that I am deeply embedded within the research setting and process – not on the periphery or the margins thereof. This is referred to as *authentic participation* (Fals Borda, 1996, 2013). I am participating in the contexts and the organisations' lives and realms, by providing experience, skills, time and contributions to the organisational development. I review reports, participate in meetings, discuss organisational challenges with staff, share learnings from previous professional and personal experiences, research organisational change and strategies as these are being negotiated and play out, attend trustees' meetings... I organise feedback meetings with the partners for them to reflect on the research and its unfolding, and direct me towards new avenues of inquiry as they manifest throughout (as part of or disconnected from) the research. My status shifts and is renegotiated on a daily basis: sometimes, I am asked to 'play' the volunteer, the reviewer, the editor, the observer, the guest, the representative… For myself, as for the partners, it is often a messy and intriguing affair – who I am, what do I do, why am I here, how do I fit, where/when does it end?

Being so far immersed in the organisations and interactions requires that I cautiously journal my experiences and contributions. Reflexive and analytic journaling are tools that can aid in recording the personal and academic path as it is trodden. I developed a template inspired from Coffey's (1999) adaptation of LeCompte and Preissle's conditions of the fieldwork. The framework references different issues of immersed ethnography, and the personal experiences of the researcher in relation to each one of these issues. There are *personal* issues, accounting for selfhood, subjectivity and the experiential nature of the immersion; *participatory* issues, that relate to the interactions with participants and settings, and the effects on the body and the self; *advocacy* issues, delving into voice (who is the voice for whom), organisational allegiances and affiliations; *roles and relationships*, as shifting and flexible; *boundary* issues, that contemplate the immersion effects and processes of organisational integration; and *ethical* issues, that carry on institutional, procedural, academic and Indigenous ethical paradigms.

I write daily, using voice typing and automatic writing. The content varies, depending on days, moods and states: it might be descriptive, introspective, reflective, (self-)critical, analytical, emotional. Sometimes, it is focused on daily tasks or activities, the meetings and the desk-based work. Other times, it is a lot more sensorial and embodied, accounting for the discomforts (physical, emotional, interactional), or intuitive, allowing for connections and insights in trends and occurrences. I annotate the type of writing that is being generated (informal, relational, sensorial, embodied, intuitive), as well as the contributions to the organisation's daily life, the effects of the research process on myself, the participants and the organisations. The journaling is being treated as data and will be analysed using qualitative methods, as inter-related and inter-informative with/of other data sources.

I consider the diarying a necessary exercise, with it fluctuating between labour and pleasure. It allows to record memory, sensations, emotions, and map traces, recurrences and trends. It is part of the analytical process of meaning-making, as well as a strategy to find grounding (Coffey, 1999). The act of writing or typing or voicing, the time it requires, and the spaces in which I write, all contribute to bridging the daily immersion and interactions to what they tell me towards the aim of the PhD. In some ways, it is a juggling between an exploration into the rites of passage (Moeran, 2009), a documentation of the life cycles and research relationships (Beech *et al.*, 2009) and the logging of scholarly struggles and ventures.

These are some processes and techniques I develop on-the-go; I adjust to the CPAR, and the processes and techniques adapt (with) me. Just as the roles, they are not rigid nor definite. In this sense, what I have shared in these pages might come under the 'praxis scrutiny' and be vastly readjusted to accommodate for the messiness and improvisation required in engaged research. In the same mindset, below, I develop some reflections on what this CPAR has taught me so far on this research journey.

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL CPAR IN THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

CPAR is aimed at working with the most marginalised (Torre *et al.*, 2012), with these co-designing the research as it unfolds. Here, however, the participants of the study are not the most marginalised of either social context, but are working *with* and *for* them. This means that the research is 'one step' removed from the 'target' participants of CPAR. Instead of dealing directly with vulnerable groups and communities, the CPAR engages with the organisations that work with these groups and communities. This is not the 'standard' CPAR configuration, where participants interrogate circuits of dispossession, power, privilege, systemic inequalities (Torre *et al.*, 2012). This makes it all the more important that this research, its findings and its outputs, serve the organisations so that they can in turn implement relevant actions for the communities they engage with, and the larger development community. Here, I join Sandwick *et al*. (2018) in their statement that 'the *critical* in CPAR also signals a larger commitment to challenging prevailing power inequities, within and beyond our research' (emphasis in original text, p. 475). I foresee the criticality *within, throughout and beyond* this research as multidimensional, contributing to a wider development debate on individual, organisational and sectoral change.

A further interrogation is concerned with: whom are the research knowledge *holders, makers and enactors*? In co-produced research, there is a commitment towards eroding, challenging and rupturing the hegemonic and orthodox knowledge belongings (elites). However, in order to obtain a PhD, the ultimate output is the written thesis. The existing stakes at hand encourage the researcher to produce findings and knowledge that will match the academic norms and standards. The PhD usually involves the production of a standardised piece of work which will be peer-reviewed and result in the attribution (and perpetuation) of an intellectual and overall elitist social status. The process towards delivering this research is in itself lengthy, costly and time-consuming. Yet, such a product is far removed from the organisations' jargon, schedules and preoccupations. Participation of all at all stages of the research, as required by the CPAR philosophy, is not always aligned nor realistic with organisational lifespans. Thus, expecting that the research will yield sustained interest, engagement

and investment, is not entirely reasonable. How can I serve the organisations if throughout the research, I might come to dis-serve them, demanding for resources that they do not have? This justifies an ongoing recalibration of the research as it unfolds. I am deliberative in my commitment to respond to the expectations of both organisations so that I can produce processes, outputs and results that they can use.

Finally, CPAR does not cater for clean, aseptic, predictable, comfortable, definite, or disentangled, research processes. It is not suitable for management-based tools and calendars, funders' reporting, annual budgeting… It is by its very nature a messy approach. But, as shown throughout this text, there are subjective shades and experiences of messiness. Aligned with the ethico-onto-epistemology of CPAR, I argue that messiness is a praxis. It goes hand in hand with complexity, ambiguity, uncertainty, unpredictability, all of which can generate discomfort. And that discomfort is an intrinsic part of the approach, making it quasi-impossible to respond to normative academic expectations. What we should be looking at is how to live *within* the messiness rather than on its outskirts.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have presented CPAR as a suitable and relevant approach to investigate issues relating to power and asymmetries in organisational settings, especially in the field of international development. CPAR caters for applied and embedded research, destined to resolve a given and identified problem and provoke social change by recognising and challenging societal and systemic manifestations of privilege, inequality and oppression. It also entails continuous analysis and critical questioning of the research itself, how it is being carried out, who is a part of it (and who isn't), to what end, who benefits from it. As part of CPAR, the participants and the researcher perform new roles, explore new identities, and push the boundaries of active research as it unfolds. This contributes to making it an inherently dynamic, messy and unpredictable approach.

Throughout the course of the research, it is crucial the researcher be involved in a self-reflexive practice: this will allow to map and account for this experimental process, and identify when and if the researcher is a conduit generating or allowing societal and systemic imbalances. I have discussed here my daily diarying as a method and a practice to retell the experiential embeddedness of the research. In logging how I am living the research, sensorial, embodied and intuitive narratives emerge that slowly shed light onto hidden perspectives of the research, in relation to interactions, resistances or recurrences. By inviting criticality, CPAR allows for the exploration and development of different practices and techniques of meaning- and sense-making. Here, daily diarying becomes simultaneously a *process* of analysis and a *method* of analysis, generating new types and sources of data that can be further explored. Insights from this project underline to what extent the praxis of messiness is an intrinsic and relevant experience of CPAR, as the journey in and through messiness provides data and evidence, as well as momentum for (self-) criticality and reflexivity.

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Chapter Seven

The myths of messiness: A reflection on Ethnographically based drama

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ABSTRACT
My arts practice-based research project in Drama and Healthcare is cross-disciplinary, working from my Theatre Design arts practice using Ethnotheatre methods to investigate menopause in the workplace, a real-world Healthcare problem in the UK. Embedded within this investigation is the collection of different forms of primary data (spoken, visual and written). This data is the foundation for making four short performances, staged at different intervals over three years. In this paper I am referring to my menopause verbatim play *Puzzled* (2018). This paper works through the tensions of using Ethnotheatre as a research method within the apparent "messiness" of arts practice research and how the competing demands of truths and performance are balenced.

KEYWORDS
Ethnodrama; ethnotheatre; theatre arts; practice-based research; menopause.

INTRODUCTION

Mid-life female Menopause has until recently been somewhat of a taboo subject in the workplace. There has been an increasing interest in the media[1] over the last year, yet despite the call from the Chief Medical Officer (2014)[2] for widespread workplace education, the trade unions typically represent this as resolving problem symptoms for individual women[3]. For many working women in the UK, dealing with their menopause is a bit of a mess. This is not a myth. However, the understanding of how messy this situation is, and how many working women might be affected, is limited to the research projects that have been conducted and defined by the individual subject areas.

[1] For example 'Men should say 'menopause' three times a day to show solidarity with women, academic says' in *The Telegraph* (22/09/18).
[2] Davies, S. C. (2015). Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2014, The Health of the 51%: Women. London: Department of Health.
[3] E.g. Wales TUC Cymru. *The menopause in the workplace, a toolkit for trade unionists.* 2017.

Menopausal research in Medicine[4] has generated such medical terms as "vaginal atrophy" and lists "symptoms" for which drugs can be prescribed. However, menopause is not an illness like asthma or heart disease. Psychologists are more attuned to this, being interested in effects on the emotional well-being of women and developing cognitive interventions[5] to understand and counter negative menopausal experiences, mental and physical. This split between medicine and psychology contributes to the mess.

The menopause is a life experience for all women, usually occurring naturally between the ages of 45-55[6]. With current projections of an active life of over 80 years, a menopause transition can be expected as a mid-life event rather than a signifier of old age, and is therefore likely to be encountered at a time when professional and family demands are greatest. Yet there is currently no mass preparation, no agreed list of definitions[7] or forms of experiences (symptoms), and little public discussion. This means that few women are currently prepared to deal with competing demands of work (society), family (life) and menopause (self). There is no clear data on any numbers of women adversely affected by their menopause, but the Department of Education Research Review (Brewis, Beck, Davies & Matheson, 2017) estimated that up to 53% of women may experience negative menopause transition symptoms in their workplace. The paucity of related evidence, concentrated on the "self-reporting" nature of the data, is rooted in the absence of workplace debates and contributes to the "mess" of the menopause transition experience for many women.

That this situation exists for such a large number of working women should be of concern for employers (in terms of adverse effects) as well as more general concerns about the wellbeing of mid-life women. Mentions of the menopause in public forums in the UK have increased over the past 18 months with celebrity journalists proposing more 'talk' about menopause[8] and new networks such as the Menopause Cafés.

Although undoubtedly well-meaning, these suggested interventions seem to apply only to specific socio-economic populations, specifically affluent middle-class women, who regularly listen to Radio 4 or who may have their own gynaecologist[9]. No consideration is being extended to the majority of working women who fall outside those niche categories. Furthermore, there is a focus within the workplace arena of important information being communicated via fact sheets rather than discussion, a scenario that has rendered menopause as unspeakable and by extension invisible.

It is in this discursive void, that many women are struggling to manage all the important aspects of their lives, a mass of information from books, websites, and news reports as well as doctors, female relatives and friends. This is also where my cross disciplinary arts practice-based research project resides, as a proposed workplace intervention. Until the constituent parts of the void are understood and language fit for use is developed, many working women will continue to struggle unnecessarily.

[4] See Foxcroft, L. (2010). *Hot Flushes, Cold Science.* London: Granta.
[5] Ayers, B. N., Forshaw, M. J. & Hunter, M.S. (2011) The menopause. *Psychology*.
[6] The average age for the menopause in the UK is 51, but some women will experience it before the age of 40, which is known as Premature Ovarian Insufficiency. Early Menopause occurs between the ages of 40-45.
[7] Brewis, et al. (2017). *Menopause transition: effects on women's economic participation*. London: Department for Education.
[8] 'Our presenters talk stereotypes and open up conversation around the menopause' on BBC BREAKFAST, *BBC One* (13/05/2019)
[9] The Truth about … the Menopause presented by Mariella Frostrup, *BBC One* (26/11/2018)

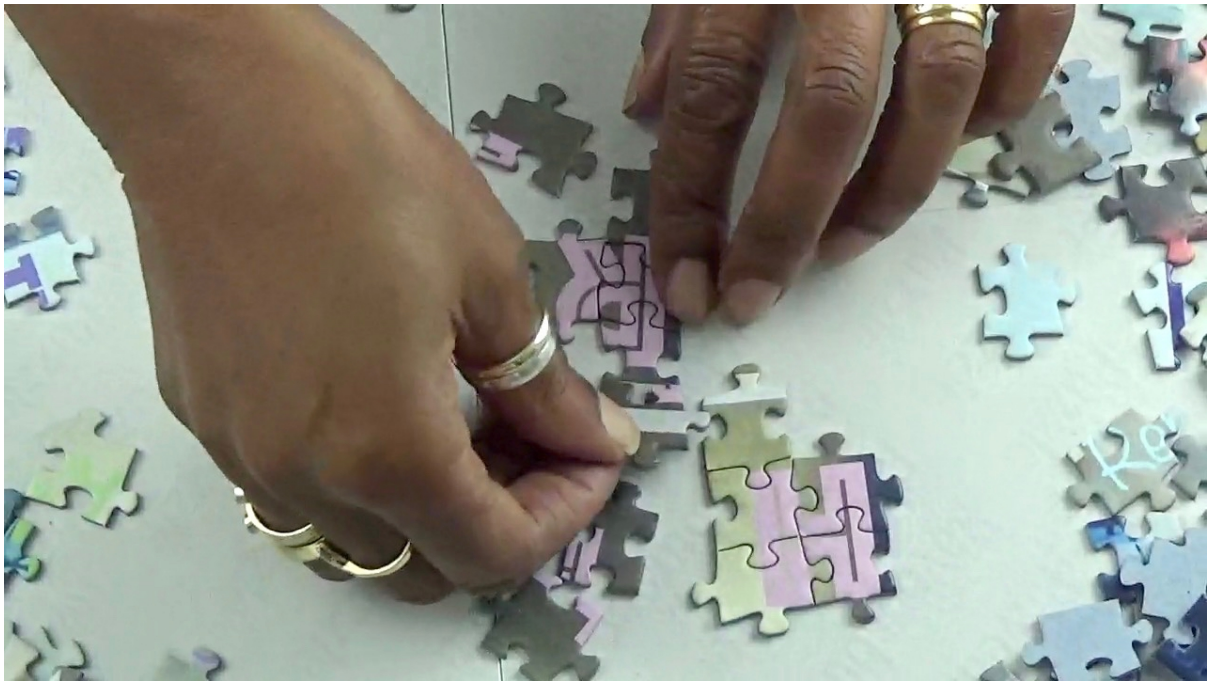

Image 1. Still image from Puzzled promo film © Hilary Baxter 2018.

My overarching aim in creating performances about menopause in the workplace is to fully understand what issues exist and the phenomenological impact on individual women. By using a theatre arts practice outcome, the complexity and overlapping nature of experiences and interactions can be explored in forms where ideas can be easily layered or co-exist, such as factual information together with personal opinions. This might seem too "messy" to be a research process when compared with more usual qualitative methodologies, however, such criticisms can be countered by claiming to more respectfully represent a complex situation, for example, the National Theatre production of *My Country; a work in progress* (Norris, 2017)[10] which documented the differing opinions and events in the aftermath of the EU referendum as the process of the UK withdrawal from the European Union commenced, conclusions could not be easily drawn, However the 'messy' complexity of the political background could be more properly represented. This emphasises the strength of public performance as a highly suitable research outcome, which can attract a broader public audience, with potentially more impact.

CONTEXT

Theatre arts practice research in and of itself uses different approaches from other academic disciplines. It is useful to know some of the general background of Arts Practice Research (APR), to understand more fully recent developments. Practice-based research is part of the specific terminology existing within arts practice. Key milestones of the formation of arts research in the UK start in 1978 with a statement from visual artist Tom Jones that not all visual art is research but 'some such art can be research and should be so considered' (Jones, 1980). Jones' contribution locates arts practice and research within the academy. It is worth adding that the vast majority of arts practice is

[10] *My Country; a work in progress- in the words of people across the UK and Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy* is the full title of the play, based on a series of interviews conducted in different regional areas across the UK in the immediate aftermath of the referendum. The show was first performed at the National Theatre and then on tour in the regions which had contributed to the interview data collection.

successful *outside* the academy, and has different criteria, parameters and terminology. It is only within the last decade that there has been any overlap between high levels of professional arts practice and PhD qualifications[11]. During the 1990s Art and Design research was the subject of much debate, not only in the UK but across Europe, with the creation of the Erasmus academic exchange programme amid serious attempts to align 'academic degree requirements and quality assurance standards' (Kälvemark, 2011) through the 'Bologna' agreement[12]. By the end of the twentieth century, the key components of arts practice research were agreed as being: the context, the potential for critical review and impact (Gray & Malins, 2004).

It was not until the expansion of Higher Education research provision into Drama schools and University departments at the beginning of the 2000s that 'a mixed-mode PhD submission could be entertained to include an artefact or a performance together with a written commentary of appropriate length and function.' (Melrose, 2002) In less than three decades a critical discourse has emerged in forms of practice where the specificity of written or spoken languages is often in tandem with more fluid, non-verbal forms of expression. This has led to a rapid development of possible definitions, where methods and terminology have been relayed from other academic subject areas to describe the research process. Although the absolute requirement of the "written commentary" is one of the major challenges for arts researchers, part of the rigour of the research process lies in defining the form of relationship between writing and their arts practice.

The somewhat fluid nature of the relationship between practice and theory allows Arts practitioners to individually define the nature of their practice within the research context. In this project my descriptor of choice is practice based research, where the formally collected research is leading the development of my theatre arts practice, contextualised within the framework of research positioning (literature, and other arts practices).

This individual approach is generally developed through the process of selecting methods and identifying methodologies. It is customary in arts practice to use a variety of research methods, often utilising different sensory languages (visual, aural etc). The choice of specific methods can therefore be described as a "bricolage" research[13], a term which has great resonance with APR researchers; specifically 'that methodology is derived from, and responds to, practice and context,' (Gray & Malins, 2004) and that the terminology ("construction" "collage" and "interpretation") is similar to that used by arts practice researchers. In a cross-disciplinary project such as mine, combining qualitative methods and literature within theatre arts practice is fundamental to open up new understandings around menopause.

The unifying basis of theatre arts practice methods is a form of the iterative "make-show-reflect-re-make" (Harvie & Lavender, 2010) iteration, in which the "show" is usually a public event and feedback is sought informally and verbally rather than through written forms such as questionnaires. This cycle of making will continue for as long as the leading practitioner (often the director) continues to work on the show. In current West End theatre practice, this process will be conducted through the

[11] E.g. Turner prize winner 2012 Elizabeth Price was awarded a practice-based PhD in 1999, Joshua Oppenheimer's film *The Act of Killing* (2012) was developed from his PhD research and received an Oscar nomination in 2014.
[12] The "Bologna" process (2010) standardises three cycles of academic achievement in the arts: BA, MA and PhD. It is generally accepted across Europe but there are exceptions such as Switzerland.
[13] "Bricolage" is a description rooted in ideas of crafting from left-over materials developed by Claude Levi-Strauss in 1966 as a metaphor for constructing meaning with cultural artefacts. This term was borrowed by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (1999) to describe emerging trends in Qualitative Research projects and further developed critically by Joe L. Kinchiloe (2001).

previews until the critics' review the first night, when the performance is considered to be finished. However, touring theatre companies will often continue to develop their production for as long as they deem necessary[14].

The iterative cycle here is not dissimilar to an Action Research methodology, and is sometimes described as such in Arts Practice PhD research (McKinney, 2008). Links have also been made with Grounded Theory approaches where the similarities lie in in starting from a 'Tabula Rasa', with an ongoing collection of materials which inform and define the field together with the use of noted ideas (memos) which are developed to become the artwork (theory). Despite the use of borrowed academic language, which therefore attracts the same criticisms as Grounded Theory, this linkage serves as an academic descriptor without using arts practice terminology. It allows for new ideas to be created from the research base, and the incorporation of different methods when (pragmatically) needed.

Bringing together Ethnographic data collection methods with performance making, where the final work is intended as a performance rather than a written thesis has been referred to colloquially as 'dramatizing the data' (Saldãna, 2005). Here I follow Saldaña's terminology, adopting the descriptor "Ethnodrama" when referring to the performance text and "Ethnotheatre" to denote the performance outcome and creative production process (Saldãna, 2011). In creating a piece of Ethnotheatre performance, an Ethnodrama will have been written. However, the production of each are entwined as the process of writing the text for the drama is confirmed by the experimentations in the theatre rehearsals, which is used to adapt the original script in quick make/ reflect/ remake cycles. This means that the finished Ethnotheatre text has incorporated performance into the end result, whereas the Ethnodrama is considered a starting point for further development.

ETHNOTHEATRE METHODS

The Ethnographic data collection (interviews, observations, photographs) of my research has been synthesized with my (theatre) performance investigation into the popular culture of the Menopause through existing artefacts: books, images, theatre productions and television programmes. Here we can identify the tensions between the two co-joined disciplines,

> For practitioners, not knowing what happens next is in the nature of the making and the ambiguity of chaos is something to be embraced rather than feared. For researchers a certain (though not complete) approach to prediction is demanded… (Freeman, 2010)

As a practitioner used to this "messy" situation of not knowing-ness, it was challenging to make key decisions in advance of collecting data, rather than responding to the context (bricolage) and personalities of the participants. Using qualitative methods and obtaining university permissions necessitated more advance planning, meaning that key artistic choices were decided early in the process, which later defined the final form of the performance. One such decision was to move away from making a performance that included the participants as performers.

[14] Nobel prize winner and theatre maker Dario Fo describes making a performance where the show was radically rewritten after the work was reviewed by the critics. The original reviews were sometimes reprinted during the extensive tour, somewhat confusing the audiences. Fo, D. 2006 [1991]. *The Tricks of the Trade,* London, Methuen Publishing Limited.

There are many examples of Participatory Action Research Ethnotheatre interventions used in Healthcare to promote understanding of complex health issues performed by the participants themselves (Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2002). Other Ethnotheatre productions have been performed by professional actors, such as playwright Nell Dunn's *Cancer Tales* which was worked from interviews and testimonies. But an embedded investigation of workplace menopause practices might have unintended consequences by undermining the initiative or the participants. There are only a few UK companies with established menopause policies[15], therefore when a link with Croydon Council[16] was established, it was paramount to respect the participant's contribution and time, so it would be appropriate to work with professional female actors.

The Ethnographic basis of my menopause performance was three semi-structured interviews with the founding members of the Menopause Group at Croydon Council. In preparing for the interviews, I considered which structure would give the most useful material for my performance. Interviewing in the workplace meant time limitations, and participants might have pre-rehearsed answers for familiar questions, which would be stilted in performance. I used a semi-structured question format, preparing short questions using an Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2007) focusing on the experience of the interviewee themselves. The participants were recruited as a "snowball" sample – the first interviewee recommended the second two.

The final section of the interview was designed to explicitly incorporate their opinions into the performance, by asking what debates about menopause they thought most important to stage and which actor or celebrity might play them onstage, as an insight into how they would like to be represented. Two of these names were adapted for the final characters in the performance.

Following the interviews, the recordings were carefully transcribed to convey the timbre and rhythm of the original speaker, including pauses and filler words (ums and ers). From these recordings, a half hour Ethnodrama text *(Puzzled)* was written for two female actors over the age of 45. I originally intended to use 'thematic analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to establish the emergent patterns across all three interviews. However, commencing with a line-by-line analysis renders the potential dialogue between two women about the menopause into small sections which, once instigated, are too detailed to be used in the drama .

BALANCING TRUTH AND PERFORMANCE

Writing an Ethnodrama for performance cannot easily be disentangled from the practical considerations of theatre making that attend any practical outcome of creative artwork, namely, questions of resources and, as importantly, who is the piece for? Who are the intended audience? How will the balance be negotiated between the "truthfulness" of the data collected and the inherently untruthful nature of mimesis (mimicry) in theatre-making, an imitation of life (Plato, c380 BC).

The initial decisions for *Puzzled* regarding size of playing area and staging possibilities of movement and set design were informed by the size of space available for the first performance at Croydon Council's Annual Staff Networks Conference (April 2018). This gave a playing area of only 5m wide by 2m deep, which would be easy to replicate in many other meeting room venues for future

[15] Marks and Spencer, Severn Trent Water and West Midlands Police all have established menopause policies.
[16] Croydon were the first local council (or one of the first) to implement a menopause strategy.

performances. These potential future plans for dissemination in the workplace, also informed the decision to use two professional actors, but this was not only a question of funding. The interpretation of three interviews into two speaking parts allowed for a blurring of the original participant's identities. This meant that individual contributions were, to a large extent, anonymised in keeping with participant's wishes (see acknowledgement), and would allow for more general public dissemination to engage with issues of the menopause, as well as the initial Croydon council audience.

The patterns that were identified from the transcripts used an inductive method (Braun, 2006), which also relates to 'grounded theory' methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1968) elements of which are often referred to in Ethnodrama (Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2002). The interview questions focused on responses within the workplace e.g. 'What has the response been to your initiative from your management?' and 'Can you put into words your own experience of the menopause, in the workplace?' but the answers given alluded to more personal events e.g. first hot flush, what the doctor said etc. But other characters also emerged: line managers, doctors, partners as well as my own as the interviewer with prompts and supportive responses. This also opened up the possibility of developing an autoethnographic positioning to the Ethnodrama, as a way of 'interpreting culture through the self-reflections and cultural refractions of identity' (Spry, 2001), but this would have prioritised my 'witnessing' responses over the experience of the participants, so I characterised my parts of the interview as different 'listeners' to the conversation, (e.g. friend, colleague, interviewer). This also maintained the accessible approach for audiences that were not assumed to be either research-savvy or theatre going.

The Ethnodrama script for *Puzzled* used small verbatim sections of all three transcripts, linked with as few "filler" inventions as possible. For example, individual references to "mothers" were dramatised into a short conversation about how none of their mothers had discussed their own menopause experience[17]. The strengths of using Ethnodrama avoids the 'double hermeneutic' (Smith & Osborn, 2007)[18] associated with IPA. Using a transcript 'verbatim' means the character directly speaks their own interpretation of the experience, with the Ethnodramatist's interpretation as the frame rather than a translation. But the frame of an Ethnotheatre performance is not simply a question of developing credible characters, dialogues and performing research narratives. It involves the active invention of ideas that will immediately engage the audience, to interest them in staying in their seat for the duration of the performance, rather than leaving.

The framing I developed for *Puzzled* featured a short audience participation scene, which demanded that members of the audience saw themselves as possible actors in events they had no prior knowledge of. This resolved itself into an actor emerging from the audience, hitherto unidentified, who 'experienced' the menopause as a journey narrative, joining an actor already onstage, doing a large jigsaw puzzle of menopause related words superimposed on an office background. The 'jigsawing' actor spoke from a post-menopausal experience positioning, both actors took the speaking and listening roles.

Following the first performance "show"-ing, the reflection stage of the creative cycle immediately begins. In the first instance, the concentration is on technical aspects of the performance: what went

[17] The 'mothers' section was also the first commented on by the audience in the informal feedback session following the first performance at Croydon Council's Annual Staff Networks Conference in April 2018.
[18] IPA researchers ask participants to make sense of their experiences, and then interpret their sense-making - hence a double hermeneutic.

well? What was unsuccessful? Immediate notes are often straightforward about technical aspects (lighting, sound) important in a live performance and responses to artistic interpretations of character (by the actors) or observations on the preformed text. Then the reflection begins to broaden incorporating responses that come from more than one source including the spectators. All of this process of reflection informs the next stage of "re-making" moving through the cycle. The reflections are worked back into the text, reforming the Ethnodrama and then subsequently the next iteration of the Ethnotheatre performance. These can be seen as overlapping layers of interests starting with the immediate practical elements and moving towards the more abstract considerations of audience reception.

For research purposes, I can interrupt the iteration to reflect upon using Ethnodrama as a methodology and whether the accusations of "messiness" are appropriate. By separating the reflection on the Ethnodrama from the Ethnotheatre performance, we can see that the Ethnodrama is another written presentation of factual data (as opposed to a series of Tables) where the research narratives can be analysed, framing how the work should be interpreted.

Using qualitative research methods for the data collection meant that the interview design also formalised the structure of the drama. The rigour of specifying what was to be collected in advance, with appropriate permissions (and storage) meant that potential directions had to be covered in advance, and that most of the information had to be collected in one session, with a follow-up interview checking the accuracy of the transcript and to add any further comments. The follow-up interviews were to check back to the participant about their first interview, correct any mistakes on the transcripts and to alleviate concerns about the restrictions of the original questions used for writing the drama, giving a possibility for collecting further data by re-directing questions if needed. In the event, no new material was used from the follow-up sessions, but it was a useful and sensitive way to check that participants were comfortable with the transcripts of the original interview

Writing an Ethnodrama is very different from the process of writing a play, even though play-writing often includes collecting a large amount of contextual research including interviews. But the primary difference lies in the accurate representation of the material, the same concerns as in more traditional Ethnographies, such as not taking the information out of context.

> Though we were fundamentally asking the same questions as the scientists… as artists we were operating in a different world with different freedoms and limitations. Scientists have a burden of proof; performers have a burden of entertainment, the methodologies are going to be different. (Paris, 2010)

Writing an Ethnodrama demands balancing these two competing demands of rigour (proof) and creating interest (entertainment). A reflexive ethnographic performance that comes from an interpretive ethnographer, rarely considers what the constituent nature of an audience might be and how to interest them, whilst aiming to bring about political and social change (Denzin, 2003). But, even very good performances[19] are an imprecise tool for social change[20], and for a Ethnodrama aimed clearly at informing the general public, balancing the engagement of the audience is as important as representing the 'truth' of the research.

[19] For example, those presented by Bertolt Brecht, Dario Fo and Augusto Boal.
[20] Theatre audiences in the UK are more likely to remonstrate on subjects of sexuality, violence or blasphemy than on grounds of social injustices.

In *Puzzled,* the burden of proof can clearly be evidenced through the use of the interview transcripts. One of the foremost considerations in writing an interview based Ethnodrama is the proportion of material that will be used verbatim, and how much (dramatic) licence will be taken to make the performance interesting. Verbatim theatre[21] suggests that a large percentage of the Ethnodrama will be worked directly from the interview transcripts. This essentially means that there will be large chunks of descriptive text (long answers to short questions) which might make it difficult to hold the attention of the intended audience. To break up what would otherwise be substantial monologues, and to retain the claim of verbatim, I used my own short interjections, as the interviewer. This allowed me to use a large percentage of interview material, reducing my own authorship to very short links between long sections, which increased the verbatim quality. But it also exposed tensions concerning how far I allowed myself to move away from the original recordings. Some of my lengthy questions e.g. 'What do you think *the* most important thing in terms of expressing to other people about the menopause?' could easily be re-phrased colloquially, but my decision here was to apply the same rules to my own interjections as I had with the "ums" and "errs" transcribed from the participants. The original recordings were truthful reflections of an interview, and a verbatim ethnodrama must respect all source material[22].

Actors have commented that audiences seem to listen more intently to the "real" speech patterns of verbatim ethnotheatre than is usual with such long pieces of text, (Hammond & Steward, 2008) and it is the slight hesitations and fragments of disjointed thoughts that communicate the thinking processes of expressing personal experiences. It is here that the choice of using IPA was important, generating interesting comments:

> I think for me, personally and what others have expressed as well, it feels like, um, *(long pause)* just you feel sane, you feel like you're not making it up, that you're not bad or a failure for being all these ways, that it's really wrong, you kind of get.

Here the pause allows for a thinking through of the emotions connected to the experience, which will inform the actor's performance.

It was not my intention to fully write the Ethnodrama before working collaboratively with the actors. I had intended to prepare sections of text, which could be moved around and edited to fit together once the actors had begun rehearsing, but the short rehearsal period meant that more of the text work was prepared in advance. I had also intended that this would be shown as a work in progress, and that there would be a second cycle of making. But, when a play has been performed, it becomes an artwork, not just part of a research process and to some extent, this text (as an Ethnodrama) could be argued as being complete. Whereas the next cycle of practice research could only start at the beginning of a rehearsal process for the Ethnotheatre performance.

But, moving into live performance (Ethnotheatre) the previously clear links with other Ethnography perfromances studies become a little "messier". Evaluting the different forms of language in use (images, acting, moving, directing) is all part of the work in a performance, and contemporary forms of theatre making, known as post-dramatic theatre (Lehmann, 2006) also allow for any of these to be

[21] Verbatim theatre history can be traced through forms of twentieth documentary theatre and with the advent of the portable tape recorder, Peter Cheeseman's creation of local plays for The New Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent see Paget, D. 1987. 'Verbatim Theatre': Oral History and Documentary Techniques. *New Theatre Quarterly*.

[22] My decision was to keep to the recording, but the spoken question did interrupt the flow of the scene. Changing the wording is still under consideration.

the primary language of the performance rather than the text as in traditional theatre. In other words, all elements on stage are part of the theatre langauge and are important in communicating the "truth" of Ethnotheatre performance, allowing the individual spectator to think into and around the subject, and make connections with their own existing experiences. This moves spectatorship from a passive 'sit back' entertainment to being an actively engaged spectator, 'co-producing meaning' (Alston, 2016, McKinney & Palmer, 2018 [2017]). That this can be an immensely powerful tool for dissemination is clear, but it is also extremely difficult to achieve, requiring theatre making techniques balenced with research methods.

CONCLUSION

A half hour Ethnotheatre performance potentially exposes an audience to more ideas than a written paper, because in the theatre ideas can be easily layered on top of each other and co-exist in different sensory languages. Using Ethnographically based theatre with verbatim text from transcribed interviews, allows the spectator to attend to conversations about the menopause, and from their "co-producing" position as an audience member, entertaining new ideas.

The strengths of using Ethnodrama as a method come from the use of the qualitative research methods employed during the data collection. The design of the questionnaire and the use of IPA as an approach was fundamental (for me) in obtaining enough interesting data from which to write an Ethnodrama, and obtaining Ethical clearance also highlights the importance of respectfully working with the data collected, not just for the management of storage, but in the manner of its public use. This choice of methods is also part of the answer of why practice-based drama research is best placed to deal with menopause within the workplace. This is complex real-life problem solving, using Ethnodrama as a methodology to improve menopause experiences of mid-life working women.

However, to fully explore the potential of Ethnodrama, the work must be moved into a piece of Ethnotheatre, and here is where the tensions lie. Whereas the written drama text can be argued for in much the same way as any thesis, arguing the authorial intentions and representing the truth, it is only by embracing the not-knowingness and apparent "messiness" of theatre-making methods, that the power of Ethnodrama as research can be fully realised.

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